

Knowing the Truth 01

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:32

What is Truth?

You are lost in a strange land. You are anxious to find your way to a place of safety, especially since you can see signs that bad weather is on its way. Not sure which way to go, you recall that someone earlier had handed you a parcel of maps and you quickly get it out of your pack and begin to lay them out to seek the correct road out of this wilderness. But your relief soon turns to anxiety as you find several maps, all of them for this place you are in, but no two of them agree on the right road to follow to reach safety! You are no better off now than before you looked at them!

What is Truth? When Pilate was about to commit one of the most horrible crimes in history, he threw that question at Jesus, but then he walked away, not waiting to receive an answer. He walked away from the One who declares that He, Himself, is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He promises that “Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free!” So there is truth to be known; Jesus claims to supply it. Pilate had one of the greatest opportunities ever offered to a man, but he walked away from it. We don’t have Jesus in person before us, so where can we find the answers today?

Jesus calls Himself the Way, the Truth and the Life; but He also calls Himself the Word! Jesus was a message of love in flesh and blood sent from the Father in Heaven, and He identified Himself with the Scriptures which are also a message of love from God to mankind. But we have a problem to deal with. I can gather up a dozen people that claim to believe the Bible and line them up. I can ask each one what the Bible teaches on a certain subject and I will likely get a dozen different answers, unless I just get blank stares from some of them. Like the man with the pile of confusing maps, we are still far from knowing the truth! And we need to know it! If ever human kind needed truth, it is today!

"A storm is coming, relentless in its fury. Are we prepared to meet it? We need not say: The perils of the last days are soon to come upon us. Already they have come. We need now the sword of the Lord to cut to the very soul and marrow of fleshly lusts, appetites, and passions." 8 Testimonies 315.

When we look up at the sky and see violent weather approaching our thoughts race to making all secure and finding a place of shelter for ourselves and those we love. We drop everything else to seek this. In our world there are strange clouds covering the horizon and they are gathering fast; we must all seek and find our safety in the 'Secret Place of the Most High!' How do we find our way?

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

It's time to do a study such as never done before;
The end of time's upon us, even at the very door.
A test will come to everyone who dwells upon the land;
And only by the Word of God will anybody stand.

It's what the Bible says that really matters now;
It's what the Bible says that counts.
It's what the Bible says that really matters now;
So teach me what THE BIBLE says.

It may be different from what I've always thought;
It may not go along with what my parents always taught.
But if the Bible says it, who am I to disagree?

Knowing the Truth: Lesson 01

The word of God is the standard and test for every creed.

It's what the Bible says that really matters now;
It's what the Bible says that counts.
It's what the Bible says that really matters now;
So teach me what THE BIBLE says.

What says the Bible, the blessed Bible?
This my only question be.
The ideas of men so often confuse us,
What says the Bible to me?

In 2 Peter, the apostle first tells us about what he and some of the disciples saw with their own eyes and experienced on the mount of transfiguration; but then he points us to the Word as even more reliable than our senses! "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:" 2 Peter 1:19

How often have you read or heard these familiar words from the beloved 91st Psalm?

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Psalm 91:1

Have you ever wondered just what that 'secret place' is? The Bible has more to say about it; look here at Isaiah 26:20, 21:

"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

Here again, as in the 91st Psalm, we are told of a terrible time of destruction on the world and about a 'hiding place' where God's people are safe and protected. Notice what the messenger of the Lord has to say about this same scenario in Advent Review and Sabbath Herald 09-17-1901

"Satan claims the world, but there is a little company who withstand his devices, and contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Satan sets himself to destroy this commandment-keeping company. But God is their tower of defense. He will raise up for them a standard against the enemy. He will be to them "as an hiding place from the wind," and "as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." He will say to them, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."

We see here that God is that 'Secret Place' where His people are to find shelter. But what exactly does that mean? The following paragraph sheds more light on the subject:

"Some of these agents of Satan were affecting the bodies of some of the saints--those whom they could not deceive and draw away from the truth by a Satanic influence. Oh, that all could get a view of it as God revealed it to me, that they might know more of the wiles of Satan and be on their guard! I saw that Satan was at work in these ways to distract, deceive, and draw away God's people, just now in this sealing time. I saw some who were not standing stiffly for present truth. Their knees were trembling, and their feet sliding, because they were not firmly planted on the truth, and **the covering of Almighty God could not be drawn over them while they were thus trembling.** Satan was trying his every art to hold them where they were, until the sealing was past, and the covering drawn over God's

Knowing the Truth: Lesson 01

people, and they left out, without a shelter from the burning wrath of God, in the seven last plagues." Early Writings 44.

Here we see people that God wants to place in His secret place, but they are not co-operating with Him. Instead they are unsure and doubting, fearful and unbelieving. So we realize that the true 'Hiding Place' must be the opposite of this; instead of doubting and fearing, those in this safe state will be believing and trusting. This is confirmed in Isaiah 26:3:

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

Their minds are focused on the Lord, and they are in perfect peace because they Trust in Him. Another meaning of peace is rest; Hebrews 4:9-11 talks about a rest that we must enter into. By the way, the Sabbath is a symbol of that special rest, the sure hiding place that we must be in, to be secure in the trials and darkness of the last days.

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

Notice again that unbelief prevents them from entering into that rest; just as we see the fearful, doubting ones in the quote above, "Their knees were trembling, and their feet sliding, because they were not firmly planted on the truth" In Revelation we are shown those who make it through:

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12.

Notice they have the faith *of* Jesus; it is not merely faith *in* Jesus; it is the very faith Jesus had that He triumphed with in the battle with evil. It is a sure faith, tried in the fire of affliction and proven successful. It is that "Gold, tried in the fire," Revelation 3 talks about. Jesus sells it to us without money; we buy it by giving Him our wretched, sin-polluted hearts and making that total surrender to His will. That total surrender, that choice to absolutely believe in Jesus, that decision to Trust in Him though the heavens fall, is what it means to enter into the Secret Place of the Most High.

It takes time, study, heart searching and much quiet meditation to obtain that Perfect Peace. As the trials thicken around us we must reach up for more and more Faith and Trust. Remember, true Faith can only be "planted firmly on the truth" that is, on God's Holy Word. This kind of faith cannot be obtained in an instant, it takes effort and time; just like any other science, it is not mastered overnight.

Satan's work is to keep us so busy and distracted that the time available to us to perfect this saving faith, slips away. We must take time to search our own hearts, as it were with a lighted candle, and find every sin, then confess them and obtain not only pardon, but power and victory over them. You don't learn to trust perfectly in Jesus in an instant. Day by day as the trials of daily life hit us, are we standing stiffly for truth? Are our feet riveted firmly to that Rock?

I urge you that if you are not experiencing real victory in your daily life right now, that you rearrange your priorities to learn how and seek the Lord until you do have it. The last hours of earth's allotted time are slipping through our fingers and we are so often "too busy" for spiritual things. Satan desires to keep us that way. Did you realize that he does not need to get you to do something 'bad' for you to be lost? Oh, no! He just has to keep you too busy to gain that spiritual preparation until it is too late. You may even be 'too busy' with good work, with things not wrong in themselves; but if you are not daily growing in spiritual strength, Satan will have you in the end.

We all tend to think, "I am just in this situation temporarily; I know I am not spending time enough on my personal salvation and my family's spiritual health is not good, but I just have to finish this course; or get this

Knowing the Truth: Lesson 01

paid for; or accomplish this project; and then I'll be alright and will make up for it." That my friends, is the devil's best lie; "There's no hurry! You can put off salvation until tomorrow!"

And do you know what he does? He lets you almost finish one thing and he gets you launched into another project or some kind of trouble and before you know it you're doing the same thing all over again! Millions will wake up when it is too late and cry: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

Jeremiah 8:20

Please take time to ponder these tragic words! What if you do buy all the things you want? What if you do get all the honors or complete all the projects, but lose your own soul? The Bible has simple advice that will beat the devil at his evil game, it says:

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things will be added unto you."
Matthew 6:33.

Yes friends, sort out your priorities until you are having time for real communion with your Lord, until the Bible becomes a power in your life, until you truly experience victory over sin in your daily walk. How did Enoch walk with God? He withdrew frequently from society and spent time alone with God. Jesus did the same.

We don't gain anything worthwhile in this earth without effort, do we? Art, music, science, skills, it all takes practice and time to perfect them. Why do we think that we can gain the Greatest Prize of all, eternal life, with only a half-hearted effort once in a while?

Finding the Time: There are so many frivolous things we waste time on, money and energy also. Sometimes you have time but are so exhausted you can't even think. That is why you put God first; in the morning give Him the best, not the dregs. Let's look at some of the frivolous time wasters: Long, meaningless chats and gossiping with friends; Video and TV; worldly music; sports and games; many hobbies; excessive time used in preparing fancy food to impress guests or to tempt the appetite. (Time spent in learning to prepare simple, healthy food is not wasted.) Learning the fashions; worldly holiday activities; attending meetings where the present truth is not being taught; (Meetings where truth is attacked are not frivolous, they are deadly!) computer games; novels and magazines; we could go on and on. I urge each one to seriously analyze how we are using our precious last hours of preparation time. The sands will soon run out, we don't know how soon, but we do know that most folk will not be ready! Don't let it be you!

Now let's take a look at the RULES the Bible gives us to follow so we can know what it actually teaches. First off let us realize that the 'rule' too many follow is actually forbidden by the Bible and that is to ask leaders and other people to tell us and then follow them without ever checking it out for ourselves! "Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD." Jeremiah 17:5.

The Bible gives us the example of the Bereans, people who had the right attitude: "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." Acts 17:11

Another method of knowing truth that the Bible forbids is going by how we 'feel' about it. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Proverbs 14:12.

"Well I can know truth because my heart will tell me if something is right or wrong." But the Bible warns: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:9.

So let's look at these Bible rules so we can know which map will lead us aright!

7 Rules of Biblical Understanding: How to Study the Word of God

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:105

Knowing the Truth: Lesson 01

In order to study the Bible and arrive at an accurate interpretation, we must be willing to abide by the following principles:

1. We must believe that the whole Bible is the inspired word of God, and we must be willing to abide by its teachings, even if they go contrary to our own personal ideas and practices. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4.

2. We must be humble and teachable. However great and extensive our knowledge and educational achievements, we must come humbly to the word of God, not seeking to study it from a secular standpoint, as a scientific or philosophical work, with a dependence upon human intellect. Trusting in intellectual pride and humanistic opinion, will prevent us from being able to understand the deep spiritual truths of the Bible. God requires us to come humbly and with a teachable attitude, sincerely and prayerfully seeking to understand His word. Jesus said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Matthew 11:25

3. We must compare scripture with scripture, letting the Bible explain itself. It is not uncommon to find individuals and groups of people who build a whole theology upon one single statement of the Bible. This can be very dangerous and misleading. The only correct and safe way of securing an understanding of a particular truth, is to study everything that the Bible has to say about that specific topic. "Whom shall He teach knowledge? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine?... For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line, here a little, and there a little." Isaiah 28:9, 10.

We must study broadly, permitting the Bible to define its own terms. This will preserve us from the practice of taking an isolated passage and twisting it to fit or "prove" our own ideas. We should always approach the Bible with an open and honest attitude, willing to lay aside any established beliefs and practices, whenever we find them to be without scriptural foundation.

4. We should ask the Holy Spirit to guide us as we study the Bible. Though written by men, the Bible has been supernaturally inspired. We therefore need the Holy Spirit, the Author of all scripture, to guide and instruct us as we study. Prayer for divine instruction and enlightenment should always precede a study of God's word. Without heaven's assistance to render our minds spiritually receptive, it is not possible to properly interpret and appreciate the truths of the Bible, which are often hidden beneath the surface and readily missed by the casual, superficial approach.

"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Corinthians 2:10-14.

5. We must truly want to know the truth before we *can* know the truth. Our motives for studying the Bible must always be honorable and acceptable to God, if we would receive instruction and guidance from the Holy Spirit. If it is our determined purpose to research the Bible in order to find an argument against the truth, God will leave us to our own devices. For example, some people use a few scriptural verses to supposedly prove that God's law was abolished when Jesus Christ died upon the cross. A proper method of research will clearly demonstrate that such is not the case, and the verses used to substantiate this idea, are found to say no such thing when placed in their proper context. Only those who are willing to love and accept the truth when it is made plain, and do not seek to construct arguments against it, will be preserved from the dangers of self-

Knowing the Truth: Lesson 01

deception. God will not force us to believe anything against our will. However, His word clearly describes what will happen to those who still choose to believe, contrary to what He has plainly said: "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." 2 Thessalonians 2:10, 11.

6. Bible study must become a priority in life. Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to "a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." Matthew 13:45, 46. We must earnestly search for truth, recognizing that it is worth more than anything else in life. This quest must be our priority, especially when other things seek to crowd out the time that should be allocated to Bible study. God's promise to us is that, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13. Our desire, our relish and our love for the Bible will strengthen and deepen, as we discipline ourselves to study it every day.

7. We must live up to all the light we have, before God will teach us more. As truth is opened to our understanding, we should determine by God's grace to walk in its light. God has set before us an upward pathway and it is His will that we should walk in His footsteps. As our Savior therefore leads us further along the pathway of advanced truth, we must determine to follow, if we would keep in step with Him, and remain His disciple. Also, living according to the truth that we already have, qualifies us to receive more light and truth from God. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:31, 32.

"And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts. I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed. And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes."
Psalm 119:45-48.

"The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers.

"It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God."-- Manuscript 24, 1886 (written in Europe in 1886). 1SM 21.

"There is variety in a tree, there are scarcely two leaves just alike. Yet this variety adds to the perfection of the tree as a whole. In our Bible, we might ask, Why need Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the Gospels, why need the Acts of the Apostles, and the variety of writers in the Epistles, go over the same thing?

"The Lord gave His word in just the way He wanted it to come. He gave it through different writers, each having his own individuality, though going over the same history. Their testimonies are brought together in one Book, and are like the testimonies in a social meeting. They do not represent things in just the same style. Each has an experience of his own, and this diversity broadens and deepens the knowledge that is brought out to meet the necessities of varied minds. The thoughts expressed have not a set uniformity, as if cast in an iron mold, making the very hearing monotonous. In such uniformity there would be a loss of grace and distinctive beauty. . . .

"The Creator of all ideas may impress different minds with the same thought, but each may express it in a different way, yet without contradiction. The fact that this difference exists should not perplex or confuse us. It is seldom that two persons will view and express truth in the very same way. Each dwells on particular points which his constitution and education have fitted him to appreciate. The sunlight falling upon the different objects gives those objects a different hue. Through the inspiration of His Spirit the Lord gave His apostles

Knowing the Truth: Lesson 01

truth, to be expressed according to the development of their minds by the Holy Spirit. But the mind is not cramped, as if forced into a certain mold.”-- Letter 53, 1900. “Selected Messages” vol 1, 21, 22.

So it was actually God who wrote the Scriptures, but he used humans, such as David, or Moses, or Isaiah etc. who wrote what they had been shown by God. However, these prophets wrote on many different topics, and sometimes they wrote on the same subjects as had been written by another. Many times we will see that one writer added some very important points that were not covered by another, and these points make the subject so much easier to understand.

So it is best, and biblical, for the student of the Bible to compare and combine the writings of one writer with that of others who also wrote on the same subject. Providing of course that we do not take verses out of context with each other. Let’s put this system to the test, and see what we mean.

“And they asked Him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? And what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass”? Luke 21:7

“They asked Him”; “they” is very vague isn’t it? Who are “they”? We will let the Bible interpret itself, we won’t guess. Before we look at another verse, would you read the two questions that “they” asked of Jesus? “when shall these things be?” and “What sign will there be?” Fix them in your mind, so that when we read other verses we will be able to agree that we are reading about the same event. We call this the “Context”.

“And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, When shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world”? Matthew 24:3.

First we must ask ourselves, “Is this the same event”? Well, the disciples ask the same questions “They” asked in Luke, so we have learned that “they”, is referring to the “Disciples”, and that “they” were on the Mount of Olives. Now we know not only who “they” were, but also where Jesus and these “Disciples” were; and then we find that there is another link added, the Coming of Jesus is also “the end of the world”.

Isn’t it great when we let The Bible interpret itself? Now we are still in a little doubt as to who the Disciples are, because there are lots of Disciples mentioned in The Scriptures. Was it the 12 disciples? or, the 70? or, the 120 disciples that get mentioned from time to time? Can we find that out from Scripture?

“And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked Him privately, tell us, When shall these things be? And what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled”? Mark 13:3, 4.

We’re at the same place, the Mount of Olives, the same, or similar questions are asked, but we now have the names of the disciples who constituted the vague, “they” of our first verse. It was Peter, James, John and Andrew. We haven’t made a guess, but we have found that one writer in The Bible simply adds to what another one has written, so that we get a clearer and more accurate story.

The same thing happens when 3 or 4 people witness the same hit and run accident; the police get a fuller picture by asking all the witnesses to tell what they saw. One may have better information on the make of the car, or the colour, another may have a better idea on the speeds and directions. Then when all the information is gathered and collated, the police have a much clearer picture emerging that will help them in their investigations. As it is in daily life, so it is in The Bible.

This was the very method that Jesus used Himself, when He explained to the two men on the road to Emmaus, that He was The Christ. Luke 24:27. “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded [explained] unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself”. I believe that if we follow the same method that Jesus used, then we must be on the right track, don’t you?

May God bless you as you seek to make the Bible a living part of your daily life!