

Christmas 2018

Christmas Means There is Truth

Well, here we are in the Christmas season. There are decorations everywhere. Stores are clamoring for you to buy their products. And many people are busy preparing for parties and festivities. But every Christmas poses a question to the world that usually goes unanswered. So I am going to ask the question and try to answer it for you over the next few weeks. And I'd like for all of us to take the time to think about the question and the answer from each week.

Here's the question. What does Christmas mean? Or more precisely, why was Jesus Christ born? What is the meaning and purpose of the life of Christ? Christmas is a time to celebrate his birth. So why are we celebrating it? What difference should it make in my life? How should it affect my thinking and feelings and actions?

Part of the answer to what Christmas means is revealed in John chapter 18. The context of the chapter is the time when Jesus stood before Pontus Pilate. Christ was on trial for his life. And he spoke words to Pilate that help to answer the question about why Jesus was born. Let's read the Scripture.

Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." ³⁸ Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?"
(John 18:37, 38a)

Our Lord spoke these words to Pilate near the end of his life. But they reveal why he was born. "For this cause I have come into the world" Jesus said, for this cause I was born "that I should bear witness to the truth." So let's think for a few minutes about these words of Jesus. Let's fix our hearts on two implications that flow from what Jesus said. And then I'll end with an exhortation.

The first implication is this: Christmas, the birth of Christ means there is truth—absolute truth. There is truth that every man and woman needs to believe and take to heart and order his or her life thereby. Sadly, today, too many

people are like Pilate who cynically or perhaps despairingly asked, "What is truth?"

A Barna research group survey asked the question, "Is there absolute truth?"¹ In answering that question 66% of adults answered no. There is no such thing as absolute truth. Different people can define truth in diverse and conflicting ways and still be correct for them. Also, 72% of people aged 18-25 years old said there is no absolute truth. In a series of interviews done at a large university both students and faculty were asked, "Is there absolute truth? Is there truth that crosses cultures and is true for all people at all times?" Again, the answer was no. They said four things about truth.

1. Truth is whatever you believe to be true.
2. There is no absolute truth.
3. If there were such a thing as absolute truth how could you know what it is?
4. People who believe in absolute truth are dangerous.

Let's think about this. First, they said that truth is whatever you believe. Now, if you agree with that statement you have a mental problem. You have a psychosis. To have a psychosis is to lose contact with reality. If you believe the chair you are sitting in is a horse, you have lost contact with reality. The dictionary defines truth as that which conforms to reality. Therefore, the truth cannot be whatever you believe it to be.

What you believe about life cannot be true just because you think it to be true or want it to be true. You cannot believe on thing about the meaning and purpose of life and have someone else believe differently. There cannot be conflicting truths.

The same people who deny the reality of absolute truth live illogical lives, because they make decisions everyday on things they believe are true. They drive a car believing in the truth or the reality of the motor. They turn on a light switch believing in the reality of truth of electricity. No one flying in an airplane wants a pilot who does not believe in the truthfulness of his instrument panel!

If there is no absolute truth then there is no right or wrong. Therefore I can steal, lie, cheat and kill and you cannot say that I'm in the wrong. If these things work for me and have become my personal truths, then who are you to judge me? And that is exactly where we are at philosophically and morally.

People ask, "Who are you to judge me or tell me how to live my life? Who are you to tell me what to believe?" But the first implication in Christ's statement

¹ <http://www.christianity.co.nz/truth1.htm>

that he was born to bear witness to the truth, means that Christ mas points to the truth.

In the university interviews I mentioned it was asked, "If there is such a thing as absolute truth, how could we know what it is?" And this brings me to my second implication concerning what Christ said. Christ said that he was born to bear witness to the truth. Therefore he is the key witness. And so it is crucial that we know Jesus Christ and trust him if we are to know the truth, believe it and live it. Let's look at what Scripture says about Jesus.

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God. ² [It]² was
in the beginning with God. ³ All
things were made through [it],
and without [it] nothing was
made that was made. ⁴ In [it]
was life, and the life was the
light of men. ⁵ And the light
shines in the darkness, and
the darkness did not
comprehend³ it.
(John 1:1-4)

In the beginning was the Word. The Greek word used is logos meaning the principle, the plan, the wisdom and will of God. The word logos never refers to a person. And the end of verse one should read and what the Word was like, God was like. The Word of God, the wisdom of God reveals what God is like. Now let's read verse 14.

And the Word became flesh and
dwelt among us, and we beheld
His glory, the glory as of the only
begotten of the Father, full of
grace and truth.

Now we are talking about a person. The will of God, his wisdom, His plan for mankind became flesh. It became concrete and could be seen in the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus shows us what God is like. He is full of truth, grace, mercy, compassion and love. He understood the truth about God and lived accordingly.

² The word "Him" in the Greek text is autos and should be translated "it" or "the same."

³ Or "overcome" it

For the law was given through Moses,
but grace and truth came through
Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has seen God
at any time. The only begotten Son,
who is in the bosom of the Father,
He has declared *Him*.
(John 1:17, 18)

The law given to Moses was not a full revelation of God or His will, His truth.
But in the words and actions of Jesus Christ we see what God is like and what
the absolute truth is concerning God and life.

Then Jesus said to those Jews who
believed Him, "If you abide in My
word, you are My disciples indeed.
³² And you shall know the truth, and
the truth shall make you free."
(John 8:31, 32)

If we look to Jesus Christ and abide in his word, if we trust what he said
and believe his promises and obey his commandments, we will know the truth
and the truth will make us free—free from error, lies and deceptions. And the
Greek word translated "know" (*ginosko*) means both to perceive mentally and
to experience in life.

Inn knowing and trusting Jesus Christ who leads us to God, truth becomes
reality. Thus if our lives are lived outside of Christ and away from God, then our
thinking and our living is based upon error. We are living deluded and deceived
lives. We are not free. We are enslaved to what is false.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way,
the truth, and the life. No one
comes to the Father except
through Me.
(John 14:6)

Jesus is the way, the way to reality, the way to peace and joy. He is the
only way to God. Jesus is the truth. How he lived and died and what he taught
points to reality. And Jesus is the life. His life shows us how to live and he is the
means by which we acquire everlasting life.

So, where did Jesus learn about God? Where did he learn the truth?
Where did he learn about the will of God? How did he gain insight into God's
love, goodness and grace and His hatred and judgment against sin? The Lord

tells us in John 17. In John 17 we have a prayer offered to God by Christ. He prayed the prayer on the night of his arrest, before he stood before Pontus Pilate. In this prayer he praised God and he prayed for himself and for his disciples and for all of us who would believe on him. So, listen to what Jesus, the key witness concerning the truth says about where we can find the absolute truth.

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.
(John 17:17)

The word "sanctify" means to set something or someone apart for a particular use or purpose. When you are sanctified you are distinguished from all other people and destined for a special purpose. That purpose is salvation from sin and a life of peace and joy now and a future of everlasting life and glory. The truth separates us from the lies told by the world.

The Word of God, the Bible, the truth teaches that there is a being called Satan, the devil. Jesus Christ said that Satan is the father of lies.⁴ The Bible says that Satan manipulates the course of this world.⁵ He blinds people from seeing the truth.⁶ This is why our world is in such a terrible condition. It is why happiness, fulfillment, contentment and peace and joy slip through most everyone's fingers. People do not believe in absolute truth because they have been deceived by Satan. But Satan and his lies are overcome through a knowledge of God's Word, found in the Bible and through salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.

So, there are my two implications from Christ's statement that he was born to bear witness to the truth. Number one, the birth of Christ means that there is absolute truth. Number two, Jesus is the key witness to all that is true.

Now, here is my exhortation. If you are not a believer in Jesus Christ or not yet fully committed to him, do not be like Pilate. Listen to the truth, learn it, do not stay blinded or nearsighted. Jesus was not born to hide the truth about life and God. He was born to reveal the truth so that you might have life and have it more abundantly.⁷ This is why in Matthew 11 Christ said,

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and

⁴ John 8:44

⁵⁵ Ephesians 2:1, 2.

⁶ 2 Corinthians 4:4

⁷ John 10:10

lowly in heart, and you will find rest
for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke *is* easy
and My burden is light."
(Matthew 11:28-30)

And to those of us who already trust in Jesus Christ, let me encourage you to rejoice in the truth. The love of God is poured out into your heart in the gift of the holy Spirit.⁸ And love rejoices in the truth.⁹ Let us love and obey the truth and speak the truth in love to others.¹⁰ Christmas means there is truth.

⁸ Romans 5:5

⁹ 1 Corinthians 13:6

¹⁰ 2 Thessalonians 2:10; 1 Peter 1:22; 2 John 1:4; Ephesians 4:15