

The Spirit of Truth



What is Truth? (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again. Our theme for this week takes the form of a very searching and penetrating question: What Is Truth?

We've seen two different ways in which the Bible answers this question. The first is stated in John 14, verse 6: Jesus says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life…" Jesus there presents Himself as the answer to the question, "I am the truth."

But a little later on in John chapter 17, verse 17, in praying to the Father, Jesus says this: "Sanctify them (that's His disciples) by the truth; your word is truth." So we see that truth is found in the person of Jesus. But it's also found in the Word of God, the Scripture. In other words, the truth is found in Jesus as attested by Scripture. It's the Scriptures portrait of Jesus which gives us the truth about Jesus, who is the truth.

And I pointed out that now days many are presenting, what Paul called another Jesus. A Jesus that's not attested by Scripture. I gave three examples which I just mention briefly—the "sentimental Jesus"—all love, no judgment. The "occult Jesus"—a kind of super-Guru. Or a "Marxist revolutionary." None of those is a Scriptural portrait of Jesus. So in considering Jesus as the truth, we always have to find out how did the Scripture present Jesus.

Today I'm going to share with you yet another way of answer our question: What Is Truth? I'm going to show you what I call "The Third Coordinate of Truth." This first is Jesus, the second is the Scripture, the third is the Holy Spirit. This is what John—and notice again it's John who's writing about the truth, the Apostle John—in his first epistle, chapter 5, verse 6, speaking about Jesus he says this:

> "This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth." (NIV)

Notice there, the Spirit—that's the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of God is the truth. So that's the third coordinate. First, Jesus is the truth. Second, the Scripture is the truth. Third, the Holy Spirit is the truth. What we have to see is, that each one

attests the other two. Jesus is attested by the Scripture, the Scripture is attested by the Holy Spirit.

You see there are a lot of preachers that quote a lot of scriptures, but they aren't always presenting the truth. They may have motives that are impure. They may be motivated by lust or by greed, or they may have some spirit of error. I'm not always prepared to accept as being the truth something that's full of Scripture. Particularly, I'm always suspicious of people who have about a half a dozen pet Scriptures that they always trot out. In fact, I'm almost sure when I hear a person who hides behind half a dozen Scriptures, that he's in error. And the more he tries to batter me with those scriptures, the less willing I am to believe him.

You see, there's something else—there's Jesus, there's the Scriptures—but there's something intangible; the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the truth. You see, the truth about Jesus and the truth of Scripture is supernatural. It's not on a purely human plain. And supernatural truth requires supernatural attestation. Otherwise, the whole thing is out of balance. And Jesus, Himself, was very careful to tell His disciples, "If you're going to find the truth and stay in the truth, you're going to have to depend on the Holy Spirit."

This is what He says in John 14, verses 25 and 26:

> "All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, [other versions say the Comforter or the Advocate, but this one says the Counselor…] the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." (NIV)

So even in order to remember the words of Jesus, they had to depend on the Holy Spirit, not on their own natural memory. That's why we can trust the New Testament as an accurate record because it doesn't depend merely on accurate human memory.

And then again in John 16, verses 12–14, Jesus says:

> "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. [Notice, He speaks about the Holy Spirit very specifically as a person. He doesn't say 'It', He says, 'He.'] But when he the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking what is mine and making it known to you." (NIV)

You see, the Holy Spirit is the great interpreter of Jesus and the Scripture. And we depend on the Holy Spirit, rightly to interpret the other two. And then Jesus again said, and these are almost His closing words to His disciples while He was still on earth after His resurrection, Acts 1, verse 8:

> "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (NIV)

You see, to be faithful witnesses they had to have the Holy Spirit. They had a supernatural message, it had to have supernatural attestation. And that was the attestation of the Holy Spirit. And then again the writer of Hebrews says in Hebrews chapter 2, verses 3 and 4:

> "How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will." (NIV)

Notice, one reason why we need to accept the truth of Scripture about Jesus is, it's attested supernaturally by the Holy Spirit. So there we have those three coordinates of truth. Jesus who is the truth, the Scripture which is the truth, and the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth which is the truth.

Now when these three agree, then we know we have the truth. When we only have two, we cannot always be sure that it's the truth. A preacher may use a lot of scriptures and talk a lot about Jesus, but yet not present us with the truth. Or he may have a lot of supernatural power but what he teaches may not agree with the Bible. Or he may have a lot of religious theory and theology, but he may not honor Jesus and give Him His rightful position. So in order to have the assurance, to know that we're in the truth, we have to have these three together—Jesus, the Scripture, and the supernatural testimony of the Holy Spirit.

In closing now, I want to say just a little more about this supernatural witness of the Holy Spirit to the truth. I want to read—guess from whose writings?—the writings of the Apostle John, his first epistle, the second chapter, first of all verses 18 through 21.

> "Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that not of them belonged to us. [The apostle John is warning the Christians there about people who start by identifying themselves with the church and seem to be real Christians and maybe perhaps be real gifted and talented, but they don't abide in the truth. And so John says you need to be on your guard against them. And this is how he says we can be on our guard. Going on in verse 20 and 21…] But you have an anointing from the Holy One, [the word anointing always directs us to the Holy Spirit. So the anointing from the Holy One is the anointing of the Holy Spirit…] and all of you know the truth. I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth." (NIV)

So John says you're going to be confronted from time to time with liars and deceivers. But you don't need to be taken in because you have this anointing of the Holy Spirit. And once you're confronted by something that's false, even if it sounds very religious, there's something in you—a little bell that will go off inside you that will say, "Be careful, he's not what he seems to be."—it's what we call we call the witness of the Holy Spirit. And it's not an option, dear friends, it's something we all need, especially in these days as deception proliferates on every side. "The anointing of the Holy One abides in us…" We must have that "abiding anointing."

Then again, just a little further on in this same chapter, 1 John chapter 2, verses 26 and 27:

> "I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. [You see there will be people who will try to lead you astray.] As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teachings you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him." (NIV)

So when people come and try to lead us astray, one of the ways we have to check out is, how does the Holy Spirit in me respond? Does it respond positively or negatively? That's the anointing. That anointing is truth. It will bear witness to the truth. It will reject error. And John says very simply but so practically, we know that the truth is one thing and a lie is another. If it doesn't agree with the truth, it's a lie.

And so we have these three coordinates that God has given us to be absolutely sure—Jesus, the Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be concluding this theme with an issue of the utmost importance to everyone of us: How Shall We Respond to the Truth?

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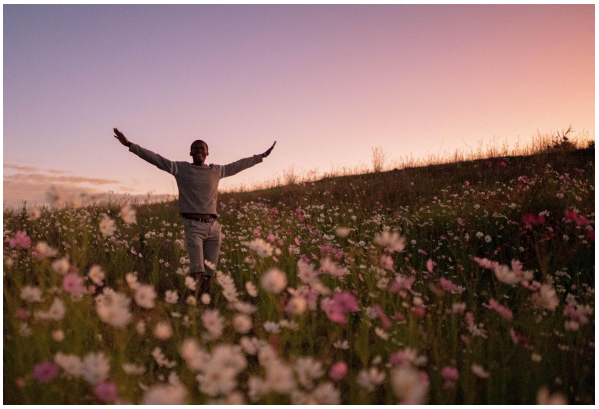

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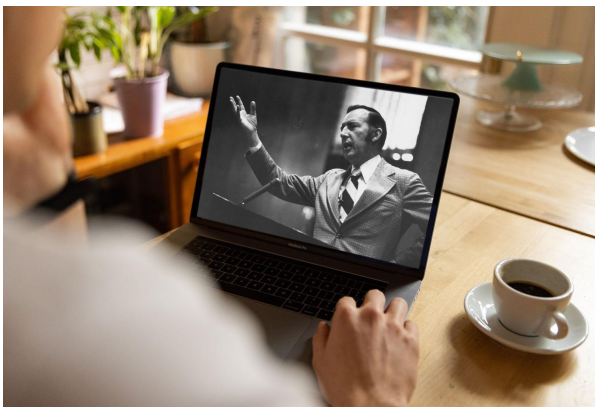

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