

## #2 Jesus Human and Divine

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### Part 6

#### *What is Truth?*

According to John's account of Jesus' trial before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, (Chapter 18, verses 37-8) Jesus admits that he is a king and describes his purpose:

"Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.' Pilate asked him, 'What is truth?'"

Indeed, what is truth? The question Pilate asked Jesus 2000 years ago is still the fundamental question of life. We need Truth (with a capital T). We need to have some certainty about how the world works.

There are simple, physical truths such as the sun will appear approximately at a certain place every day, seem to move across the sky, and then disappear at another place. We know the truth that we must eat food and drink water to stay alive. We need to dress warmly when it is cold. We need to care for our children because they can't do it themselves. There is no human being who disagrees with these truths.

But then, things get more complicated. What is the truth about moving beyond our physical needs and into the much more complex business of living life? Over the course of our lives, we have to personally answer some very essential questions. The conclusions we reach govern how we live from day to day. For example, we have to figure out whom we love and why we love them. We have to learn what talents and abilities we possess and how to use them. We have to understand our own bodies and what they need physiologically and medically so we can properly care for them and maximize our lifespan.

You may find these examples a bit strange, what do they have to do with Truth? But one way of looking at Truth is that Truth is our individual understanding of reality. Hence, all of us have our own unique way of looking at the world. In one sense, it doesn't matter how the way we understand truth is "right" or "wrong" from a scientific data-driven point of view. Ask just about any smoker and they will tell you they know the fact that smoking will eventually kill or hurt them in some way. Yet they continue to smoke, despite this objective truth (and, yes, the addictive effects of nicotine, etc.)

Time after time, when we look at the fellow human beings living with us now or in generations past, we may ask ourselves repeatedly why they thought as they did and acted as they did. How could so many Germans have supported Hitler and all the evil he stood for? How, in our Coronavirus-threatened day, can there be people who oppose the concept of vaccination? Why do so many people work at jobs they hate, continue in abusive relationships, or follow certain religious or political leaders?

Yes, there are psychological and economic explanations behind such behaviors, but it still boils down to our personal understanding of reality, our own personal Truth. If, for example, you work at a job you hate, part of the reason you continue is that you've convinced yourself that all alternatives are worse. That is your truth. An outsider may see your situation differently and be able to point out attainable alternatives, but you reject them.

Thus Pilate was, in some ways, correct when he asked Jesus, "What is Truth?" Everyone has their own version of Truth.

Religion is one source of Truth and every religion human beings have followed have claimed to be True. One of the functions of religions is that they provide their adherents with a set of "truth principles" or worldview to help them in everyday life. Religion is kind of a shortcut for living because the claims of the religion have done some of the thinking for you. Atheists or non-religious people still have to answer the same questions about life that we all do. They, however, have to find the answers mostly on their own.

Jesus stated in John 14:6 that "I am the way, the Truth, and the life." In short, Jesus claims that his particular worldview, his particular teachings, apply not only to himself but to all of us.

Next week: Why should we accept Jesus' worldview?

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Grace and Peace to You!

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***Please join us for Sunday Worship at 10:30!***

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