

What is Truth?

In the 18th chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus responds to a question asked by Pontius Pilate, “Are you the king of the Jews?” He replies affirmatively and adds, “for this reason I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” To this, Pilate asked, “What is truth?”

We live in a world that believes in truth in terms of relativity. What might be true to you might not be true to me. And yet there are many people out there that demand that you concede to their point of view insisting that it is factually provable. Is truth relative? Is it provable? What is truth?

Truth is reality. No matter what a person thinks, the truth remains the same. Someone might be insistent that gravity does not exist. Everyone is entitled to his opinion, but gravity is real whether you believe in it or not. Truth is the same. In fact, acknowledging gravity’s existence is to believe in a truth. But a triviality like gravity is not really what most people are referring to when they ask about truth.

Gravity is a verifiable phenomenon. In the material world there are truths that we can observe, measure, and confirm (at least on some level). Within the realm of the Creation vs. Evolution debate, this is a relevant mode of discussion. Does the physical universe confirm or disprove the existence of God? The evidence is examined and conclusions are made based on whether God or random chance appears to be the most likely culprit. But then there are truths that cannot be confirmed through the scientific method. These are the ones most people inquire of when they ask about the truth.

The question of truth might be more accurately posed as, “Are there moral absolutes?” A moral absolute is an unwavering standard that states in no uncertain terms that certain things are good and other things are evil no matter what circumstances might arise. There is a lot of talk these days about *alternative lifestyles*, abortion, war, and economics. Most people have opinions on these topics but few people claim to know what it is that makes their perspective correct. That is because truth, in the moral sense, cannot be determined through mere debate. There must be an authority that determines the difference between good and evil. So, what determines moral absolutes?

In a worldview that excludes the existence of a Supreme Being, there can be no absolute standard. Sure, people attempt to devise an absolute code of ethics for the godless but the majority of atheists are aware that without God there can be no absolutes.

Some, however, have claimed that evolution determines morality. This hardly provides a foundation for moral absolutes as morality evolves along with culture. One day it might be perfectly fine to kill your neighbor. The next day, it might be the highest crime to even walk on his lawn.

Others have attempted to argue that science determines morality. This cannot be true. Although science can provide insight into how things work, it cannot provide moral answers. Science, for instance, can prove that a mass of cells inside of a woman's womb is a living organism, but it cannot tell us whether or not it is okay to kill that organism.

There are even individuals who simply say that "we just know the difference between right and wrong." Really? How do we know the difference between right and wrong? Their response might include an example like, "It is wrong to hit your brother or sister." Question: "Why?" It just is, is not a sufficient response. There needs to be a standard by which we can determine that it is wrong if we believe it is wrong.

Moral absolutes can only exist with the presence of a moral law-giver. For instance, within the first five books of the Bible God gives over 600 laws to the nation of Israel that he asked them to follow. Some of the laws are as strange as to demand that they wear specific types of clothing. One might ask, "Why were they supposed to obey such laws?" The answer: God told them to (this is simplified, but it is the bottom line).

Jesus revealed a very startling reality. The truth is that the law given in the Old Testament represents the standard of God and we have all failed to fulfill that standard. But then he realized that we can be forgiven for the ways that we have betrayed God through accepting him as Lord and Savior. If it were not for Jesus, we would never have any insight into the nature of truth.

More information may be added in the future. Feel free to submit questions concerning what is truth? to preacherbill174@gmail.com.