

Winter 2012 Newsletter
Detroit Bible Students Ecclesia
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biblenewsletter.org

*"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him
in spirit and in truth."
"Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth."
~John 4:24; 17:17~*



WHAT IS TRUTH?

The year 2012 is once again a national election year. Those in office seeking re-election have been honing their campaign strategies for many months, trying to get a jump-start on the opposition. The also-rans of the last election are vying for another shot at the coveted office, and the various parties are casting about for new names and faces with which to dazzle the electorate.

Soon the media will be jammed with campaign coverage. News papers and magazines will be full of the stories of this or the other candidate. The airwaves will be full of the assertions and promises of the hopefuls. There will be charges and counter-charges leveled at the opposing party's candidates, and it will be the dilemma of the voter to try to sift the truth from the lies. How ageless is the query, What is Truth?

This was the question Pilate asked Jesus many centuries ago. Jesus was accused by the Pharisees of sedition against Rome. Their accusation was false, motivated by their jealousy of Jesus and their wish to preserve their own political power over the people (John 11:48-53). However, their charge required the attention of the Roman governor. The account tells us, *"Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?"* John 18:37,38

Pilate did not wait for Jesus' answer, thinking his question was unanswerable. But to those of us who follow Jesus, his testimony is truth. We accept the Bible as the word of God and weigh all other

assertions against its testimony. In the words of the Apostle Paul, *"let God be true and every man a liar."* Rom. 3:4

The first great truth found in the Bible is, *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."* (Gen. 1:1) As a result of the misrepresentations and erroneous doctrines ascribed to the Bible, men have come to dismiss its authority and doubt its simple statements of truth. Since the character of the Almighty has been maligned by the various conflicting creeds of man, the very existence of the Creator is called into question. However, the alternative that man has proposed as science is so irrational as to strain belief. For this reason, many scientists today are returning to the concept of intelligent design in the origin of the universe and of life.

While stopping short of calling this intelligence God, the fact remains that no rational explanation exists for the complexity and intricacy of living organisms except that of design by an intelligent creator. Investigators have calculated the probability of a *single* living cell coming into existence by chance as 1 divided by 1 followed by 340 million zeros.

Compound this ratio by the fact that plant and animal life consists of millions of highly specialized cells, thus making the likelihood of blind evolution beyond astronomical. In other words, the possibility of this happening amounts to *infinitely impossible*, and yet most scientists still try to find ways to support this theory. However, even if an acceptable probability were to be found, the fact remains that there would still be a need to explain the origin of the raw materials that so successfully came together to form such a cell.

The next great truth found in the Bible is, *"... the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."* (Gen. 2:7) It is the union of the body with the breath of life that forms the soul. A living being does not have a soul, it *is* a soul. After the death of the Apostles, the influence of the Platonic philosophy of a metaphysical soul that exists apart from the body, found its way into the Church and, as a

result, the simplicity of this basic biblical truth has been obscured. However, the scriptural statement is that a living, breathing being *is* a soul.

The next great truth of the Bible, found in Genesis 2:16,17, is closely related to this concept. Adam was created physically perfect and given an idyllic environment in which to live. He could have lived forever, but God set a test of obedience before Adam with the warning that death would be the result of disobedience. Obey and live; disobey and die. The Apostle Paul summed up God's sentence when he wrote, *"For the wages of sin is death."* Rom. 6:23

This great truth has been missed by the religions of earth, while Satan's great lie, *"Ye shall not surely die,"* (Gen. 3:4) has been accepted and promulgated through the various creeds, not only of the pagan world, but also of Christendom. God tells us, *"Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die."* Ezek. 18:4

Of our Lord Jesus we also read, *"Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."* Isa. 53:12

The opposite of life is death, not life in some other form. Adam was created to live. Had he not sinned, he would have lived forever. But sin brought death upon Adam and all his progeny. *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"* (Rom. 5:12)

Man's case was hopeless, but for the next great truth of the Bible that, *"God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* (Rom. 5:8) *"... the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Rom. 6:23) *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* John 3:16

Our whole race was under the sentence of death, and had no hope. But, because of the love of the Creator for his creation, Jesus came to be man's Redeemer. *"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."* (1 Cor. 15:22) *"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."* 1Tim. 2:3-6

The Apostle James gave the Jerusalem church, and to us all through them, the great truth that God has a plan by which he is working out his designs for man. He said, *"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."* Acts 15:14-18

From this we understand that since Calvary God is not dealing with the world in general, but with a specially called out church class as, for instance, in the past he dealt individual patriarchs from Noah until Jacob and not with the world in general; and from the Exodus to Calvary he dealt with the Jewish nation only but not with the Gentiles. Since Calvary to the second advent of our Lord and the completion of the church, he deals not with the world, but with the special class he has called out of the world, to be the bride of Christ and joint-heirs with their Redeemer. (John 17:9-11; 1 Cor. 1:26,27; Rom. 8:28) To these *"it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them [the world] it is not given."* (Matt.13:11)

The Apostle Paul tells us what the gospel is and what it means to us. *" And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. ... And if ye be*

Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:8, 29) Thus we find the truth that God is developing the church during this age so it can, as the bride of Christ, assist in the blessing of all the nations. Then will be fulfilled that wonderful prophecy, *"...and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts."* (Hag. 2:7)

And, finally, Jesus taught his disciples to pray, *"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth even as it is done in heaven."* (Matt. 6:10) The Scriptures declare that a great change of dispensation is coming, when instead of the world being subject to the prince of this world who now works in the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:2), it shall instead be under the dominion and rulership of the Prince of Glory, who redeemed Adam and his race from the curse of death by the sacrifice of himself; a world in which the knowledge of God will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14); a world in which the ransomed race will return with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads (Isa. 35:10); where there will be neither sorrow nor crying nor any more pain (Rev. 21:4); and where death has been swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. 15:44) and mankind will be invited to take of the water of life without cost. Rev. 22:17

*"O sing unto the LORD a new song:
sing unto the LORD, all the earth.
... for he cometh to judge the earth:
he shall judge the world with righteousness,
and the people with his truth."
~Psalm 96:1, 13~*

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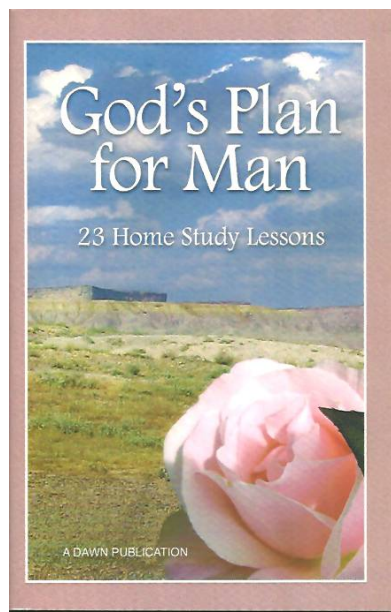
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