

# Light Brings Salt

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## Iron Range Bible Church

*Dedicated to the Systematic Exposition of the Word of God*



### **TRUTH IS ABSOLUTE AND CAN BE KNOWN**

**Pastor John Griffith**

Recognizing that there is Absolute Truth is a critical "doctrine" if you will, that is extremely important for our day. The culture tells us that there are no longer absolutes. It tells us that propositional truth cannot be known.

Personal experiential reality is what counts today. In other words, "you create your own reality." "What is right for you is right!"

Many years ago, Francis Schaeffer saw this day coming and wrote:

What Hegel changed was something more profound than merely one philosophic answer for another. He changed the rules of the game in two areas: EPISTEMOLOGY, the theory of knowledge and the limits and validity of knowledge; and METHODOLOGY, the method by which we approach the question of truth and knowing . . . A central reason Christians do not understand their children is because their children no longer think in the same framework in which their parents think. It is not merely that they come out with different answers.

The methodology has changed -- that is, the very method by which they arrive at, or try to arrive at truth, has changed. (ESCAPE FROM REASON)

Another author, David McCallum, expands on this in his book *The Death Of Truth*. He says our culture now accepts the basic

ideas of postmodernism. Reality is in the mind of the beholder. People can't think independently because they are "scripted" by the culture. No longer can one prove anything, especially by history. And more specifically, by history quoted in the Bible. McCallum notes that, ironically, people are very interested in spirituality but reject biblical Christianity!

William H. Smith (WORLD, April 20, 1996) adds that the Church since the Reformation has always practiced "boundary-set thinking," with doctrine-established scriptural fences. He points out that the paradigm has shifted to a "centered-set thinking." Centered-set thinkers are not concerned with boundaries but direction. Center-set thinkers are relativists with no walls. The center-set thinker would say, "the Gospel can include what you want it to, and it's OK if your heart is right."

You can describe Jesus and the Gospel by the Bible or by Mormon or New Age standards. Fences do not count! [quite common]

The Reformers believed that the biblical truth could and should be stated propositionally and systematically. Their confessions drew boundaries and testified to the world, in concentrated form, the truths proclaimed in Scripture. There is no doubt that creeds have weaknesses. Because of the humanness of believers in Christ, no doctrinal statement will be perfect.

Any statement made must continually be refined and tested by the Word of God itself. But to throw away propositional statements of truth completely will bring

upon us a new spiritual dark age that will be more wicked than all our present failures wrapped up in a bundle.

Though fallen, man is created in the image of God and the Lord has given in His Word knowledge which man desperately needs. The Bible then sets forth its own statement of what the Word of God itself is all about.

It presents itself as God's communication of propositional truth, written and in verbalized form, addressed to those who are made in God's image.

Thus, mankind can understand because God speaks, He communicates on our human level. But the culture now vehemently denies the fact that God has clearly spoken in His Word!

Working from what they would call a closed system (that is, that if there is a God, He cannot break through the world of man), but the secular and the unbiblical theological thinking of today would say that it is absolutely impossible to truly know truth as recorded in Scripture!

Thus simply aim to "feel" God, to experience God and you do this by "feeling" yourself! Emotions become the basis for your truth. The emotional reality becomes the message!

### **Can we see the results of this in our churches? Absolutely!**

- \* "Worship" dominates over teaching.
- \* "Feeling" God dominates over knowing God.
- \* "Sermonizing" dominates over teaching.
- \* "Shorter" impact sermons dominate over content full doctrine that can impact the direction a believer is going.
- \* Music dominates over words.
- \* "Felt need" sermons dominate over doctrinal exposition.
- \* "Thin Surface" sermons dominate over deep-study propositional truth.
- \* Topical messages dominate over verse-by-verse book exegesis.

- \* Church growth fever dominates over believer maturity.
- \* "A Believer friendly" atmosphere dominates over a need for confrontation and conviction.

What occurred at Mt. Sinai? Moses said to the crowd, "You saw God's great power; you heard God speak." (Ex. 19:16-18; 20:20-22) What Moses was saying to the people, "What you heard was a verbalized communication from God to man, in a definite, historic space-time situation." [it was real, it occurred at a specific place at a point of time.]

Moses was not giving some kind of content less, existential experience, nor taking an anti-intellectual leap. **He was giving to Israel God's clear, understandable message!** We find exactly the same kind of communication occurring in the New Testament, for example, when Christ spoke to Paul on the Damascus road.

Though all learning and all knowledge is skewed by human limitation, nevertheless, truth is truth. An apple may be red. But if I am going blind it may appear to me as purple.

The problem is not with the apple but with my eyes. Properly researched biblical history reveals for us the truth though we may have a learning limitation. [incorrect isogogics or hermeneutics]

Yet the truth is still there. The world is disavowing that we can know truth, and especially Biblical truth. The Bible is presented as a scrapbook of big pieces of mythology and a little bit of disjointed history. Schaeffer comments:

It is plain, therefore, that from the viewpoint of the Scriptures themselves there is a unity over the whole field of knowledge. God has spoken, in a linguistic propositional form, truth concerning Himself and truth concerning history and the universe. (*The God Who is There*)

When God speaks about history or reveals something of Himself in the heavenlies, the unity of truth is there because God has spoken truth into all areas of our knowledge.

Though the Lord is transcendent and beyond us, He has condescended to reveal Himself in the Scriptures because of His great love for us. **This revelation of who He is, is certain.**

Others foresaw our day when truth and the search for truth would be diminished in the area of biblical studies.

The great Princeton theologian and thinker of the 1800's Charles Hodge wrote over one hundred and fifty years ago:

It is one of the distinguishing doctrines of Protestants that knowledge is essential to faith. This is clearly the doctrine of Scripture. How can they believe on Him of whom they have not heard? is the pertinent and instructive query of the Apostle.

Faith includes the affirmation of the mind that a thing is true and trustworthy. . . . Truth must be communicated to the mind, and seen to be possible, before any evidence can be believed. **If, therefore, we cannot know God, we cannot believe in Him.** (Systematic Theology, Vol. 1, pp. 353-354)

Hodge further stated:

No man hesitates to say that he knows that there was such a man as Washington, or such an event as the American Revolution. If this testimony of man can give us clear and certain knowledge of facts beyond our experience, surely the testimony of God is greater. What he reveals is made known.

We apprehend it as it truly is. The conviction that what God reveals is made known in its true nature, is the very essence of faith in the divine testimony. We are certain, therefore, that our ideas of God, founded on the

testimony of His Word, correspond to what He really is, and constitute true knowledge.

It is also to be remembered that while the testimony of men is to the mind, the testimony of God is not only to, but also within the mind. (Ibid., p. 364)

**Believers need to know** that the terms doctrine, teaching, exegesis, truth, are not bad words. They reflect the fact that God has given us absolute and certain knowledge. The Word of God is sufficient for the truth about ourselves, the truth about our Lord, and about our eternal destiny!

Recently revisionists have called on Christians to forsake their fixation on "head-knowledge." They say we're concentrating too much on knowledge and too little on feelings and creativity. No one doubts that there is a place for feelings, emotions in relationship to our convictions and in our commitments, and response to God.

But those feelings, emotions are to be a response that is built on tangible truth and promises. They must flow out of, be a response to our thinking and knowing truth, not to be a cause of our convictions and response to God.

**Believers need to know** that the Bible is reasonable and requires reason to understand it. The Lord says "**come let us reason together . . .**" (Isa. 1:18). Paul adds in 2 Tim. 2:15, *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.*

Since we are far too often dull of hearing (Heb 5:11-14) and the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit is certainly required for our illumination. But God still works through that which is objective, written reasonable, mental and verbal.

The Scriptures tell us this plainly, *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching . . . that the man of God may be able to meet all demands, equipped [by*

*that inspired Word] for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).*

*"Proclaim the word; . . . with great patience and instruction" (2 Tim. 4:2). "Belief comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17).*

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### **What's My Line - The Obama Game Show**

He was born of a Muslim father and an atheist mother, who in his own words was "a lonely witness for secular humanism, a soldier for New Deal, Peace Corps, position paper liberalism." She divorced when he was two years old and remarried another Muslim living in Indonesia, where the young man was educated in Catholic and Muslim schools in one of the most radical Islamic countries in the world. Though his father and stepfather were both Muslim, he tries to mitigate their religion by saying that by the time his mother married them, they had become atheists. After he was ten years old, he mostly was raised by his atheist grandparents.

The New York Daily News reports that he changed his life in his junior year of college at Columbia: he said he stopped doing drugs, ran three miles a day, and "He went to socialist conferences at Cooper Union and African cultural fairs in Brooklyn and started lecturing his relatives..." After graduating Columbia and then Harvard, he began working in Chicago supporting social programs. He recruited a local United Church of Christ Church on a government-sponsored community outreach. Around 1988, he joined the church because, he says, "that religious commitment did not require me to suspend critical thinking, disengage from the battle for social justice, or otherwise retreat from the world that I knew and loved."

The United Church of Christ is not to be confused with the cult "Church of Christ." The United Church of Christ, however, supports homosexual marriage, abortion, environmental justice, globalism, the International Criminal Court, the Palestinian movement and believes that

Israel is illegally occupying the covenant land. The UCC seems to conveniently justify and legitimize his beliefs that social progressivism is equal to Christ and he writes in his memoirs that his own salvation was not an "epiphany." He reasoned after his daughter asked about life after death, "I wasn't sure what happens when we die, any more than I was sure where the soul resides or what existed before the Big Bang."

His name is Barak Hussein Obama. And he is running for President. He is courting evangelical Christians from the pulpit at Rick Warren's Saddleback church and by using public proclamations reported in the news media. Some Christians are saying he is a Democrat that evangelical Christians can support. Many have suggested that his Islamic and atheist upbringing combined with his social progressive membership in the United Church of Christ\* make him an outstanding presidential candidate. Others believe he may be a threat to the national security. Will the real Obama please stand up? Jesus said in Matthew 7:15, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

\* United Church of Christ is a church with no doctrine and you can believe in anything and its okay.