

Pilate therefore entered again into the Praetorium, called Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered him, "Do you say this by yourself, or did others tell you about me?"

Pilate answered, "I'm not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered you to me. What have you done?"

Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not of this world. If my Kingdom were of this world, then my servants would fight, that I wouldn't be delivered to the Jews. But now my Kingdom is not from here."

Pilate therefore said to him, "Are you a king then?"

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this reason I have been born, and for this reason I have come into the world, that I should testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice."

Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

When he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no basis for a charge against him. (John 18:33-38)

What is **truth**?

What is **honesty**? Is not honesty simply **choosing truth all the time**?

Beloved, don't believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit who confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit who doesn't confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God, and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of whom you have heard that it comes. Now it is in the world already. (1 John 4:1-3)

How do you test spirits?

What is a spirit according to this passage?

Spirit of **truth** vs. spirits of **deception**. It is up to us who choose **which spirits control us**.

Don't you understand that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the belly, and then out of the body? But the things which proceed out of the mouth come out of the heart, and they defile the man. For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual sins, thefts, false testimony, and blasphemies. These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands doesn't defile the man." (Matthew 15:17-20)

Is honesty simply expressing **whatever one feels like** or thinks in their mind and heart?

What if the **heart is full of deception** and **darkness** as Jesus described?

Deception affects not merely **ignorant** masses but can be even worse in the **religious** elite.

What is the problem with **remaining** deceived?

This can morph from **simple ignorance** into **self-deception** which is a **much worse** problem.

Is there a problem with spouting out **whatever makes us feel good** in the moment?

What is the big deal with **vulgarity**? Is it because God might be **offended**, or something much deeper?

Truth is not merely **being honest** about my present feelings and condition, though that is part of it.

Truth and honesty go together, and **authentic truth is objective**, not subjective.

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the **truth**, and the **life**. No one comes to the Father, except through me. If you had **known me**, you would have **known my Father also**. From now on, you know him, and have seen him." (John 14:6-7)*

Why is truth important? Truth is not a fixation with 'being right,' having all the right answers. **Objective truth** is dependent on **the very Origin of truth**, or we **disconnect from life** itself. **Being lost** is not merely a label but rather a **description** of all who **attempt to live life without** true purpose, fulfillment and **dependence on their Creator**.

*For **God so loved the world**, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever **believes in him** should not perish, but **have eternal life**. For God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but **that the world should be saved through him**. (John 3:16-17)*

What does it **mean** to be **saved**?

Does 'getting saved' mean **convincing God** to let me go to heaven sometime?

Is God the one deciding whose in or out, who **escapes punishment** and who **enjoys freedom**?

*I will **come near to you to judgment**; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against the perjurers, and against those who oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and who deprive the foreigner of justice, and don't fear me," says Yahweh of Armies. "For I, Yahweh, **don't change**; therefore you, sons of Jacob, are not consumed. (Malachi 3:5-6)*

*Behold, **I have given him for a witness to the peoples**, a leader and commander to the peoples. Behold, you shall call a nation that you don't know; and a nation that didn't know you shall **run to you**, because of Yahweh your God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for **he has glorified you**. **Seek you Yahweh while he may be found**; call you on him **while he is near**: let the wicked forsake his way, and the **unrighteous man his thoughts**; and let him **return to Yahweh**, and **he will have mercy on him**; and to **our God**, for **he will abundantly pardon**.*

*For **my thoughts are not your thoughts**, neither are your ways my ways, says Yahweh. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are **my ways higher** than your ways, and **my thoughts** than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down and the snow from the sky, and doesn't return there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, and gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall **my word** be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall **not return to me void**, but it shall **accomplish that which I please**, and it shall **prosper in the thing I sent it to do**. (Isaiah 55:4-11)*

What if **God is who He says He is**, and what **if that contradicts** nearly everything **religion** claims?

What is the **real meaning of John 3:16** and 1 John 1:5?

What if God is more loving than anyone dares to admit?

***This is the message** which we have heard from him and announce to you, that **God is light**, and in him is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)*

Does love punish as part of its function? What does John **explain about love** in 1 John 4?

*In **this is love**, not that we loved God, but **that he loved us**, and **sent his Son** as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, if **God loved us in this way**, we also ought to love one another.*

No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God remains in us, and his love has been perfected in us.

*We know and have **believed the love** which God has for us. **God is love**, and he who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him. In this love has been made perfect among us, **that we may have boldness** in the day of judgment, because as he is, even so are we in this world. There is **no fear in love**; but perfect love casts out fear, because **fear has punishment**. He who fears is not made perfect in love. (1 John 4:10-12 16-18)*

Remember, **knowing the truth**, as Jesus says, is what **sets us free**! Truth is a **person**!

*Jesus therefore said to those Jews who had believed him, "If you remain in my word, then you are truly my disciples. You will **know the truth**, and the **truth will make you free**." (John 8:31-32)*

What does **freedom look like**?

Can we **live in freedom apart from realtime dependence** on God, simply **doing our own thing**?

*Jesus answered them, "Most certainly I tell you, **everyone who commits sin is the bondservant of sin**. A bondservant doesn't live in the house forever. A son remains forever. **If therefore the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed**." (John 8:34-36)*

Salvation is not about getting **access to heaven** to escape hell. That **selfish** motivation cannot survive the **intense atmosphere** of heaven. Salvation is **letting heaven gain access to our heart**!

Knowing God goes way beyond knowing **facts about God**, though that needs to be a **corollary**.

Jesus says that **'knowing' our true Father** in heaven and **knowing Jesus** is the **essence of eternal life**. This is why **salvation is a summary word** for being **reconnected** with the only **Source of life and joy**.

*But all things are of **God, who reconciled us** to himself through Jesus Christ, and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation; namely, that **God was in Christ reconciling** the world to himself, not reckoning to them their trespasses, and having committed to us the word of reconciliation. We are therefore **ambassadors on behalf of Christ**, as though **God were entreating by us**. We beg you on behalf of Christ, **be reconciled to God**. For him who knew no sin he **made to be sin on our behalf**; so that **in him we might become the righteousness of God**. (2 Corinthians 5:18-21)*

Who took the initiative to restore us into **intimate fellowship** with our loving **Father in heaven**?

What is sin?

Does **God hate sinners**? Or does God love His children while **hating the lies** that **make them afraid**?

What if your **children** were **stolen** from you, then **brainwashed** to **believe slanderous lies** about you?

How would you feel about your children? **Would you hate them** for spurning your love because they had been **brainwashed** with so much propaganda that they couldn't trust anything you say?

Whose credibility is being **questioned**? Ours or God's?

Who is being judged in all of this? Are we being **judged by God** or is **something else going on**?

Who is doing the judging?

What is judgment?