

New Creation Publications Inc.

TRUTHING OF THE TRUTH

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Published by

NEW CREATION PUBLICATIONS INC
PO. Box 403, Blackwood, 5051
Adelaide South Australia 1982

First Published July 1982
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ISBN 0949851 20 5

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction: The Value and Significance of this Study	1
2. God is the God of Truth	1
3. Man Lives in the Lie	1
4. The Lie Brings Terrible Bondage	2
God as the God of Truth Has Always Been Communicating the Truth	3
6. The Dynamic Communication of the Truth	4
7. How the Truth Comes to Man	6
8. How Man Lives in the Truth	7
9. The Battle for the Truth	9
10. The Proclamation of the Truth	11
11. Conclusion on the Truth	12

Cover Design by Glenys Murdoch

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PREFACE

The facts are the facts, but they are not really the truth. The truth is God Himself, His nature and His actions. The truth is what God has done in the history of time, namely creation, providence and redemption. He is called THE GREAT I AM.

Further to this He is called the Alpha and the Omega. This means that He always was, always is, and always will be. It means that He has always been in action, is in action, and will be in action. In other words, He will fulfil His will in creation and history.

All of this action is the truth. It embraces all deeds done by creatures within His will. It is this truth of God which is more than the observable facts we find in the phenomena of the universe.

Only the word of—which is identical with Himself—can tell us what we need to know. Humanity chose the lie instead of the truth of God (Romans 5: 25), hence we need to break out of the lie and come into the truth.

This is the purpose of this little study book. May it be a help in revealing the truth of the truth, as also a help in teaching us to live it.

1. INTRODUCTION: THE VALUE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

- (i) From the manward side truth is needed to set men free from any untruth in which they live (John 8:32, Ephesians 1: 13-14).
- (ii) Living the truth in love is the norm for true human living (Ephesians 4: 15, II John 1-6, III John 1-8).

2. GOD IS THE GOD OF TRUTH

- (i) He is the God of truth, ie. the truth, and the true God (Psalm 31:5 NASB , Jer. 10: 10, Deut. 32:4, II Chron. 15:3, Psalm 100:5, 146:6).
- (ii) The truth is not simply ‘the facts’. The truth is God as He is, as He has ever been and will be; what He has done, does and will do. It therefore embraces all creation, redemption, the regeneration of creation, and so on.
- (iii) God’s word is truth (John 17: 17). This word is creative, sustaining, prophetic, redemptive, regenerative. God is as good as His word. His word is identical with Him and when uttered neither ages nor loses its power.

3. MAN LIVES IN THE LIE

- (i) Man was created by the word of truth, for the truth (Gen. 1:31, Eccles. 7:29). He lived in the truth, ie. with God. He was commanded by the word to the life of truth (Gen. 1: 28f).

- (ii) Man was tempted to doubt the word - 'Hath God said?' (Gen. 3: 1ff). He exchanged the truth of God for a lie (Romans 1:25). The truth of God for man is God as He truly is, what he does and will do. Loving the truth is thus doing God's will. Man sought to do only his own will. Romans 1: 20ff shows that 'the lie' is (a) idolatry, (b) sexual immorality and perversity, (c) all forms of evil - these springing from broken relationships with God and others.
- (iii) Man was tempted to believe the lie by Satan. Man has thus surrendered himself to conditioning factors such as (a) Satan the deceiver (Rev. 12: 9, II Cor. 4: 4, II Cor. 11: 3), (b) man's fellow man (II Tim. 3: 13, Ephes.4:14 cf. Romans 3:4), (c) sin (Heb. 3:12-14, Romans 7:11 cf. Obadiah 3), (d) lusts (James 1:14, Ephes. 4:22 cf. Prov. 11:8, Jer. 49:16), (e) idols (Isaiah 44: 20). The idols (the false gods) are always contrasted with God, the *true* God. (f) deceitful demons (I Tim. 4: 1f).

4. THE LIE BRINGS TERRIBLE BONDAGE

- (i) Man is going against the true and natural (functional) order of the universe. Thus he can be said to be disjointed, dislocated, disfunctional, dislocated as a person.
- (ii) Man lives perpetually under God's wrath when he suppresses the truth in (acts of) unrighteousness (Romans 1:18ff).
- (iii) Living in the lie is a manner of existence. It is contrary to the truth. It is opposite to living in the truth (Romans 1:25ff, John 3:19-21, I John 1:6f cf. Isaiah 59:1-15, especially vs. 13-15).

- (iv) We have to conclude that man has - since the Fall - been living wholly in the lie.

5. GOD AS THE GOD OF TRUTH HAS ALWAYS BEEN COMMUNICATING THE TRUTH

God, being the truth, and His word being the truth can only send forth truth by His word and actions. His alternative - to conceal the truth from His creation - does not accord with Who and What He is. He is the God of revelation; that is *He interprets Himself to His creation, whether they wish Him to do so or not*. Some of the media of this communication are as follows: -

- (i) Creation (Romans 1: 19f, Psalm 19:1ff).
- (ii) The law, for the law is truth (Psalm 119:43, 142, 151). 'Thy law is the truth'. 'All thy commandments are truth'.
- (iii) Theophanies, ie. manifestations of God in various forms. It is always indicated that God is showing himself by these means, eg. 3 men (Gen. 18: if), a burning bush (Exod. 3: 1ff), a vision of glory (Ezek. 1), a vision of holiness (Isaiah 6: 1ff).
- (iv) Angelic messengers. These are the angel of the Lord, other angels. They appear many times, and always carry some part of the truth of God.
- (v) The prophetic word. These prophets speak the truth of God (Exod. 7: if). They are the voice of God, bringing the spoken word of God.
- (vi) The inscripturated word. Thus the OT and NT writings. These include the law, the prophets, the holy writings such as Psalms, the Gospels, the acts of the early church, the apostolic letters and the revelation of John.

- (vii) The conscience of man which relates to creational-moral law (cf. Romans 2: 14-15) hears the voice of God. Doubtless the Spirit of God works in this realm (cf. Romans 9: 1).
- (viii) There are three witnesses to the truth who likewise communicate, namely the incarnate Word (Son), Jesus of Nazareth (John 14:6, 8:40, 18:37), the Holy Spirit, known as the Spirit Of truth (John 16: 12-15), and the church which proceeds upon the basis of the inscripturated word, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The church proclaims the truth of God.
- (ix) To all these we may add 'the acts of God', ie. these are the truth of God in action. Truth is action, although not all action (of evil powers and fallen man) is truth. The acts which should be self evident need interpretation by the word, the Son, the Spirit.

6. THE DYNAMIC COMMUNICATION OF THE TRUTH

- (i) God has always Spoken. The media above shows us that. Man who lives in the lie does not listen. In fact he cannot afford to do that (Romans 1:28, John 3:20, 8:40-43) because the truth confronts the lie. It is the antidote to deception.
- (ii) God has spoken in covenant (a) to Abraham, (b) to Israel, and (c) to Israel and the nations (Gentiles) in the new covenant.
- (iii) God has spoken in (through) His Son, the Word-made-flesh. Jesus of Nazareth is the true word spoken by God. Acts 10:36-38 speaks of Jesus being the word spoken by God as he (Jesus) spoke the word. John 1: 14, 18, 5: 17ff, 14:6-11 cf. Matt. 11:27 all indicate that

- Jesus is the very (incarnate) word of God. He is witnessed to as authentic (ie. the truth and true) by (a) John the Baptist (John 1:6-8, 32ff., 5:33-35), (b) the works he did (John 5:36, 14:11), (c) the Father (John 5:37, Matt. 3:17, 17:5, I John 5:9-10), (d) the Scriptures (John 5:39-47), (e) the baptism (I John 5:6-8), (f) the cross (I John 5:6-8).
- (iv) The Son has revealed the truth of God. All that he was and did was the truth in action. (John 1: 14, 14:6). Jesus described himself as a witness to the truth (John 18: 37). Thus everything he did was the truth in action, and really the Father in action. It was the truth being worked out. It was not 'the truth-of-redemption' as against the 'truth-of-creation'. Rightly understood they are the one.
 - (v) Jesus the paradigm of the truth of man because he is the truth of God. Jesus was truly man, and lived as true man should live. In this case he had his own personal identity as Son of God, Messiah, son of man, Davidic King. Even so his humanity was as true humanity should be. What he did through that humanity was unique to him, and was the truth of God. Anyone who is in God will have a unique ministry also. We see then the general truth of man in Jesus, as also the unique outworking of his humanity in his unique identity as son of man, Davidic King, Messiah, etc.
 - (vi) The truth as in Jesus was not grasped; hence the Holy Spirit had to come to communicate this truth. This is seen in I John 5: 7-8, John 14: 17, 26, 15: 26, 16: 12-15. He is the Spirit of truth because he is the Spirit of God, of the Lord, of Jesus, of the Son, of the Father. He - like the Son - has been in the work of creation, providence, redemption, and will be in the eschatological work of the Godhead. Hence he has al-

ways been active in the truth.

- (vii) The Father and the Son sent the Spirit of truth to the new people of God. As Jesus had been (and is) the witness to the Father, to the truth of God, so the Spirit came to aid men (a) to know the truth, (b) to live in the truth, and (c) to proclaim the truth. Man then is to be the witness to the truth.

7. HOW THE TRUTH COMES TO MAN

- (i) Man, as we have seen above, lives under the lie, and in it. He cannot know the truth. He does not wish to do so. He does not wish to be confronted by the truth. All around him are conditions conducive to continued deception.
- (ii) All around man also are the things of truth. These confront him continually and so attack the lie he espouses. The multiple media of truth (Section Five above) are never ceasing in their work of communication. Man, as created, is not structured for the lie but for the truth. Therefore man is always uneasy in the lie. The power of the lie is inferior to the power of the truth. The truth is things as they essentially are, but the lie is things as they are not essentially. Hence the lie must ultimately fail. Thus Romans 10:17 shows that faith comes with the word preached and that word is the word concerning Christ - the truth. This word comes through the Spirit of truth and hence is wholly the truth. Thus the Spirit convicts (convinces, rebukes) with the truth (John 16:7-11).
- (iii) The Gospel restores man to the truth, killing the lie. Jesus said, 'You will know the truth and the truth shall set you free'. Notice he preceded this by saying, 'If you continue in

my word...' (John 8:32). The truth then is dynamic. It comes as the word of God or of Christ, and is the word of the Spirit. The following scriptures emphasise the transforming power of the word of truth:- Ephes. 1:13-14, I Cor. 1:17-2:5, Romans 1:16-17, II Cor. 6:7, II Tim. 2:15, James 1:18 (word of truth), Ephes. 5: 26, I Cor. 6: 11, Titus 3: 5, I Peter 1: 22. Notice that this word proclaimed through the power of the Spirit (Act-s 1: 8, I Cor. 2:4-5, I Thess. 1:5) effects a radical change in those who hear, even though they have been living the lie. It brings repentance, faith, forgiveness, justification, cleansing, adoption (sonship), sanctification, and the gift of the Spirit. Man now lives in the truth. Man now knows the word which has made him (and makes him) free.

8. HOW MAN LIVES IN THE TRUTH

- (i) The truth is God, all that He has done, does and will do - 'Who was, and is, and is to come'. Creation and man are in this truth.
- (ii) The truth of man is what he is as created by God, and as relating to him in dependency. By redemption man has been restored to his true self, and lives truthfully.
- (iii) The truth by which man lives is the truth 'as in Jesus' (Ephes. 4: 21). The Spirit enables man to do this.
- (iv) Man in his life then must be congruent with the truth - 'as in Jesus'. A good example of this is in Ephesians 4: 17-5: 13. The paradigm is Jesus 'the truth is in Jesus'. This is the way one lives. Such living in truth is by (a) imitation (Ephes. 5: 1, I Cor. 11: 1 cf. I Peter 2:21-25), and (b) habitation, ie. the truth -

Christ - lives in us (Gal. 2:20, Col. 1:27). This habitation is by the Holy Spirit (Ephes. 3: 16). Also (c) union is the state of Christ and his people, especially by baptism (Rom.6: 1ff, Gal. 3: 26ff). Man cannot live the truth by his own resources, but by the resources of him who is the truth.

- (v) To live in the truth is to 'truth it in love' (Ephes. 4: 15). 'Truthing it in love' means that God Who is true, and Who is love has given us the truth of living, and this - by nature of the case - must be a life of love. This is seen in I John chapters 1 and 2 where to walk in light (the truth) is to love. To walk in darkness is not to love, and is indeed to hate. Ephes. 4: 17ff shows us what is the lie and what is the truth. We have seen in John 3:19-21 and I John 1:6f, that one does the truth or one does the lie. A clear example of living the truth (ie. doing it) is seen in I John 3:16ff. For living in, or following the truth see II John and III John.
- (vi) To live in the truth is to proclaim it. The church was told to proclaim the Gospel of truth. This was to witness to Christ (Acts 1:8 cf. Acts 1: 22, 2: 32, 3: 15, 5: 32, 10: 39, 41, 13:31, 22:15, 26:15). This is the same as preaching the word of Christ, the word of truth. In the book of the Revelation, Christ's people are those who witness to the truth. They do all on account of 'the word of God and the testimony of Jesus'. They are said to have or to hold the testimony of Jesus. The word and the testimony are never apart (Rev. 1:2, 9, 6: 9, 12: 17, 20: 4, 19: 10). Again this testimony is the witness they give to Christ who is the witness to (the truth of) God.

9. THE BATTLE FOR THE TRUTH

- (i) In one sense the truth being what it is there is no need to battle for it. One might as well battle for God! The battle is to see that the truth is not obscured by the lie (and lies) of evil that the glory of God may be seen. Also that the truth confronting man, man may be either saved or confirmed in his evil as unrepentant persons.
- (ii) The Scriptures in both the OT and the NT set out to show God as the truth, to vindicate the truth, and to show man and evil powers that they live in the lie. Thus all witness given by God is juridical. That is, it will leave Satan, evil powers and unrepentant man without a shred of true evidence at the final assize of history. Thus God's judgements will prove to be 'just and righteous altogether'.
- (iii) God battles for the truth. He does this by His unremitting affirmation of the truth. This comes through the various media. However in Christ He has killed the He by the Cross and Resurrection. The truth of Him as Father, as love, as judging righteously and as Covenant-God has been shown by the Atonement. The so-called power of evil has been broken because the accusation of Satan has been stilled in the guilt-suffering of the Cross. This can be seen from such passages as Heb. 2: 14-15, I John 3: 8, Col. 2: 14-15, Romans 3: 24f, 5: 1, 8:1.
- (iv) Revelation 12:7-11 shows Satan and his angelic hosts unseated from heaven and cast down to the earthly sphere. The good angels under the leadership of Michael the archangel, over-

come these powers of deception and falsity by the truth. Likewise the brethren whom Satan has accused to God defeat the Devil by the same stratagem, and overcome him (cf. I John 2:13-14, James 4:7, I Peter 5:8-9). Battling is not physical, nor are truth's weapons material ones. The truth is the power for the truth.

- (v) The people of God by holding the testimony of Jesus can defeat the lie of evil. They are accomplished in the warfare of truth (Ephes. 6: 10-18, II Cor. 10: 3-6). As with the heavenly conflict in Revelation 12 so with us; we wrestle with principalities and powers. In this conflict we need all *the truth*, ie. truth, righteousness, faith, gospel of peace, and salvation. With these is the sword of the Spirit, ie. the word of God. With these we can overcome the false and deceptive powers.
- (vi) When we read Ephesians 4:22-24, Col. 3:9-10, and Romans 12:1-2 we see that evil powers seek to condition the minds of believers. II Cor. 11:3, 13-15, with Matt. 24:24 and Rev. 16:14 (of. 13: 13) show that Satan seeks to deceive the elect by his imitation of signs and wonders. Against these Jesus had warned (Matt. 7:21-23). For this reason the mind needs continual renewal to cast off the evil ideas of the powers of deception, for sometimes they are enticing and even appear beautiful. In I John 2:22-29 and 4: 1-6, John warns against pervasive evil. He points out that believers have an anointing (ie. the truth from the Spirit) and so they know the truth, and can recognise error or imitation. Also Christ lives in them. Thus they can keep clean and renewed, fresh in the truth and they can recognise and overcome falsehood in whatever form it may appear.
- (vii) Ultimately Christ will overcome all enemies (1

Cor. 15:24-28 cf. Rev. 11: 15). The means by which he wins victory is the use of the sword, ie. the word of God (Rev. 1: 16, 2: 12, 19: 15). This word of truth ultimately overcomes all falsehood, brings judgement and punishment to evil, and establishes the new creation.

10. THE PROCLAMATION OF THE TRUTH

We have seen that proclamation of the truth is essential. God does this. He draws into the truth those who hear. He then expects them to be changed by the truth, to live in the truth and to proclaim the truth. To know the truth is to live it, and to live it is to proclaim it.

There are some ground-rules for proclaiming the truth. The first is that we should hear the truth, and then go on hearing it. To hear the truth must mean to obey it. He who does not obey has not heard. This is brought out in Luke 8: 1-21. The parable of the sower in this passage tells us that the truth only prevails in those who hear it 'and hold it fast in an honest and good heart and bring forth fruit with patience'. To receive light (ie. to light a lamp) and to cover it up means we are ashamed of the truth and fear lest others see its light. When we act thus then the truth is taken from us - not that we ever really had it! When we obey it then more truth comes. Jesus' true fellow family members are those who 'hear the word of God and do it'. This is the same as 'doing the will of the Father' (Matt. 12: 50). He who wills to do that will knows the truth (John 7: 17).

The second ground rule for obeying the truth is not to fear persecution. This means not to love one's life unto death (Rev. 12: 11), for one may well die for the proclamation (Rev. 6: 9, 20: 4). Certainly one will suffer (II Cor. 4:7-12, 6:3-10, 11:23-29, Rev. 13: 5-10, 14: 12) if one proclaims the truth. This is

because one confronts other human beings with the truth when they live in the lie.

Another rule for proclamation is to have the anointing of the Spirit (Acts 1: 8, I John 2: 20, 27) for he is the Spirit of truth. We can witness to the truth when he enables us (John 15:25-27). In the Acts (cf. I Cor. 2:4 5, I Thess. 1:5, I Peter 1:12) the apostolic church witnessed only by the Spirit. He brought the people of God to truth, transformed them by the truth, helped them to live in the truth, and so witnessed to the truth by their lives and their uttered words.

11. CONCLUSION ON THE TRUTH

Ultimately truth will triumph over the lie. It was never in danger of being overcome by the lie.

The lie has no truth, therefore no reality and no finality. Even so the lie is powerful because it deludes men and supernatural powers into thinking that God can be overcome. In fact the truth cannot be defeated *by nature of the case*.

Those who need the truth therefore need the word of God. That it has been inscripturated is a wonderful thing. With a simple mind, living in the fulness of the Spirit, they can 'let the word of God dwell richly' in themselves. In so doing they will be drawn on to live the truth in every way. We can speak then of living *the relational truth*, ie. *the truth of being*. Whatever we are we must be truthfully. Thus there is the truth of a father, a mother, a son, a daughter, a brother, a sister, a husband, a wife, a grandfather or grandmother, a mother or father-in-law, and so on.

There is also *vocational truth*. We live our vocations faithfully, ie. truthfully. We do what we are supposed to do. We also live *moral truth*, ie. we obey the commandments of God as to true living. We live in love, righteousness, holiness, goodness, and

so in truth. The truth of love demands every element of our lives be lived selflessly. We thus serve God and others, even before we serve ourselves. Indeed this is the way we truly serve ourselves.

We could expand our notes to cover all aspects of truth, but this is not possible. What we must grasp is that knowledge of the truth is not simply an intellectual or mind grasp of doctrine. We may have the doctrine of angels and live like devils, or we may have little basic doctrinal 'truth' and yet live as people of the truth. We repeat that the truth is something we do, something we live. It is life lived in God who is the truth. Apart from this way there is no true way. 'The way of a man is not in himself.' 'The steps of a man are ordered by the Lord.'

Let us then gladly live in the truth. This only is the way of true human freedom.