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JOHN 18

Douglas Olena • Life Together • April 21, 2019





THE STORY

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- 17 The extended prayer takes place at the end of the Passover meal. John's gospel is unique that way.
- 18:1 After the prayer, Jesus and the disciples go to Gethsemane. John records no prayer there.
- 18:3-12 Judas arrives with soldiers and their commander, and officers of the Jews to arrest and bind Jesus then take him to Annas, former high priest.

TWO THINGS

- When Jesus said, “**I am He,**” they drew back and fell to the ground.
 - Was this magic, astonishment, or just force of personality?*
- Then Simon Peter drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. “**Put your sword back in its sheath!**” Jesus said to Peter. “**Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me?**”
 - Not, “**he who lives by the sword shall die by the sword.**” Matt 26; or “**No more of this!**” touching Malchus’ ear and healing him, Luke 22:51.
 - Or, “**Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as you would an outlaw?...**” Matt 26:55, Mark 14:48, Luke 22:52

ANOTHER THING

- When Jesus said, “... let these men go,” he protected them, and so retained their freedom, and kept them as his disciples.



**PETER DENIES JESUS
THREE TIMES**

**JOHN 18:17, 25, 27 . . .
THE ROOSTER CROWED!**



JESUS BEFORE ANNAS

- Jesus said, “I have spoken openly to the world. ... I said nothing in secret....”
 - An officer slapped him, “Is this how you answer the high priest?”
- Jesus replied, “If I said something wrong, testify to what was wrong. But if I spoke correctly, why did you strike Me?”*
- Annas sent him to Caiaphas.
- No record in John of the interview with Caiaphas. But they take him from Caiaphas to Pilate. vs. 28



CONVERSATION WITH PILATE

- Jesus is taken to the Praetorium, the place where Pilate ruled.
- Pilate asks the Jews, “What do you accuse him of?”
- 30 “If He were not a criminal,” they replied, “we would not have handed Him over to you.”
- It turns out that the right for the Jews to execute criminals had been taken from them by the Romans a few years earlier.
- So they brought Jesus, whom they thought should be executed for blasphemy, to Pilate, for whom Roman law does not provide execution for blasphemy.
- The Jews can’t kill him by Roman law, and the Romans, by law, have no justification for killing him either.

CONVERSATION WITH PILATE

- Pilate, “What have you done?”
 - Jesus tells about his kingdom which is not a worldly one. So his disciples do not use worldly methods to prevent his arrest, (besides the obvious ear cutting by Peter).
- Pilate: “Then you are a king!”
 - Jesus, “You say that I am a king,” a colloquialism for “Yes.”
- Usually in an argument (philosophical) we look for the conclusion or the purpose or reason for somebody saying or doing something. Here we find it near the end of the project.
- Jesus, “In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”*

BAD CHOICES

- Pilate says, “What is the truth?”
- Then Pilate tries to release Jesus to his accusers but can’t convince them to take him.

Part I

THE TRUTH

STARTING WITH THE CONCLUSION

- The word truth (αληθεια) is used in a variety of ways in this setting and others, in Classical and Koine Greek.
- As a word, its uses are complex and varied, but always reliant on the basic moral proposition of truth telling and honesty.*
- Truthfulness as a human must be part of the image of God in us, just as lying and deceitfulness is a corruption.**
- In Christian terms, success at the truth game, is to become like Christ in the world, a son of God (Romans 18), with a relationship with the Father like Christ had in the world.
- Truth is that relationship

MORE CONCLUSION

- Truth is a moral quality
- Abandoning morality for expedience is contrary to the truth.*
- The higher truths of religion rely on, or are connected with the ordinary truthiness of human relations.
- God in Jesus is truth incarnate. But that doesn't mean we can't or shouldn't test or experiment with the truths he speaks.**
- Trying out obedience is a risky but necessary step in the development of our own relation to truth.
- The Touchstone: a test of truth.



Ch 17, vs **15** I am not asking that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the evil one. **16** They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. **17** Sanctify them by the **truth**; Your word is **truth**. **18** As You sent Me into the world, I have also sent them into the world. **19** For them I sanctify Myself, so that they too may be sanctified by the **truth**.

-Jesus

“

Ch 18, vs 37 ...“You say that I am a king,” Jesus answered.
“For this reason I was born and have come into the world, to testify to the **truth**. Everyone who belongs to the **truth** listens to My voice.” 38 “What is **truth**?” Pilate asked.

-Jesus

Part II

THE
TRUTH

WHAT IS TRUTH?

- Jesus' truth is transcendental, that is, originates from heaven and doesn't fit well into a merely material human perspective.*
- His locutions are not symmetrical:
 - “I am the way, the **truth**, and the life.” (John 14)
 - “But when he, the Spirit of **truth**, comes, he will guide you into all the **truth**.” (16)
 - “Sanctify them by the **truth**; Your word is **truth**.” (17)
 - “I was born and have come into the world to testify to the **truth**.” (18)
 - “Everyone who belongs to the **truth** listens to my voice.” (18)

WHAT IS TRUTH?

- The **truth** is a person, as in one of the trinity, the godhead.
(Jesus)
- The **truth** is both a person and a representative of the godhead.
(Spirit)
- The **truth** is an active power to sanctify (word)
- The **truth** is out there, an object (rational and/or spiritual) that one can have a relation with. An honest person must acknowledge it.
- The **truth** can own a person
- **Truth** is a relation to God and acceptance of all the effects of living for **truth** and for God.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

- What is truth (αληθεια)?
 - Strongs Concordance gets us part way...
 - “truth, but not merely truth as spoken; truth of idea, reality, sincerity, truth in the moral sphere, divine truth revealed to man, straightforwardness.”
 - Two things stand out, Truth as facticity and Truth as reality. But these are basic, required for any conversation to move forward.
- So facts and reality are a large part of what we need to assemble the truth. We have a variety of theories that ask the question about our relationship with reality in terms of truth.

WHAT IS TRUTH? (NOT A COMPREHENSIVE TREATMENT)

- Ordinary view of truth
 - Not telling lies, being straightforward, honesty, facts*
- The Platonic view of truth is part of his theory of knowledge.
 - Truth as recollection
- Modern scientific views of truth
 - The correspondence theory of truth
 - Pragmatic theory of truth
- Mathematical, rational, or transcendental theory of truth
 - Coherence theory of truth

WHAT IS TRUTH? PLATO AND SOCRATES

- The Platonic view of truth is part of a theory of knowledge.
 - Truth as recollection
- The soul is alive forever, and its origins are unknown, but thought to be in God defined as divine reason, though personhood may also be part of Plato's God concept.

WHAT IS TRUTH? FACTS AND REALITY...

- Modern scientific views of truth
 - The correspondence theory of truth
- Science is in the business of discriminating between facts and non-facts. What is reality?

WHAT IS TRUTH? FACTS AND REALITY...

- Alfred Tarski: Truth by correspondence. Objective facts.
 - “‘Snow is white’ if and only if snow is white.”
 - Tarski’s definition escapes being a tautology because there are material tests that have to be made to make sure that our observations and therefore our evaluations are correct.
- An interesting feature of Tarski’s thinking:
 - Humans have an innate capability of truth testing. We can get it right, make a correct judgment.
 - The Touchstone: an ancient test of truth.

WHAT IS TRUTH? PROBABILISM

- Modern scientific views of truth
 - Pragmatic theory of truth
 - The informal or ordinary idea behind pragmatism is to do what works at the moment, an instrumental view of action, not knowledge.*
- A pragmatic theory of truth is scientific in that truths are known by the accumulation of observations (that is, what is thought to correspond with reality.)**
- But, certainty is unavailable. We are left with what is probable only. This theory is often called probabilism.
- Its truths are conditional, temporal, and material, not a subspecies of logic.

WHAT IS TRUTH? DOES IT ALL HANG TOGETHER?

- Mathematical or rational theory of truth
 - Coherence theory of truth
- Truth by coherence: When all the ideas hang together and support each other, then each statement of that system is true.
- The primary weakness is that when one proposition is discovered to be untrue, then the entire web of statements can fail. (And if there is insufficient real-world data, the theory can be without meaning.)
- It also fails when the definition of truth is merely by means of consensus, or solidarity. “It’s true because we have agreed that it is.”

WHAT IS TRUTH? COHERENCE

- But there is no necessary connection with material reality. It is a mode of idealism, transcendentalism, where the grounds of reality are outside our material reality.*
- This is often called metaphysical.
- This is the form of truth required in religions, where ideals stand above the hurly burly of everyday life, where the roots of our belief lie in an indisputable text, or revelation.
- This separation from material reality doesn't have to be toxic, and in pentecostalism it may be true that experience has priority, though it shouldn't be above material examination.

WHAT IS TRUTH? FACTS AND REALITY...

- None of these definitions are entirely suitable for the whole constellation of meanings for truth.
- We have no way of certifying that knowledge beyond the grave adds anything to our life, or that we are pre-existing.*
- We don't think mere correspondence with material reality is sufficient for the truth. Since in a purely material universe there is no faith, love, justice, freedom, goodness, or a variety of other things we value and base our lives on.**

WHAT IS TRUTH? FACTS AND REALITY...

- None of these definitions are entirely suitable. (cont.)
 - Though, on the other hand, we would be adrift if truths didn't correspond with reality, if belief alone was sufficient for truth.*
 - Pragmatic truths may be enough to guide our apprehension of the real world and our reality, but do not elevate us beyond the material.

WHAT IS TRUTH? FACTS AND REALITY...

- None of these definitions are entirely suitable. (cont.)
 - Is coherence or solidarity enough to guarantee that our religion is not in vain?
 - Not as long as our coherence is reliant merely on language and the people who have agreed to call something true.
- But we take it, as our forebears have, that there is a reality both material and spiritual that is coherent, even though our expression of that is always flawed and incomplete.
 - It is nonetheless true, and not because we say so, it must be or the cross and resurrection is a misperception.*
- Being true in this case does not equal provability.

CONCLUSION I

- Constraints for the apprehension of any truth include features of most of the modes mentioned:
 - Innate (Image of God):
 - Moral
 - Material:
 - Correspondence
 - Pragmatic
 - Metaphysical:
 - Coherence

CONCLUSION II

- Truth is a moral quality
- Abandoning morality for expedience is contrary to the truth.*
- The higher truths of religion rely on, or are connected with the ordinary moral truthiness of human relations.
- God in Jesus is truth incarnate. But that doesn't mean we can't or shouldn't test and experiment with the truths he annunciated and we have interpreted.**
- Trying out obedience is a risky but necessary step in the development of our own relation to truth. Abraham and Isaac.