

What is truth? Is there a truth? Paper No. OCCG-039

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: A person's worldview determines how they decide what is "truth" to themselves. You cannot convince them something is true if it is false in their worldview. Effective evangelism requires that we first convince others that the only the Bible is the appropriate worldview.

KEY WORDS:

Truth
Worldview

GLOSSARY:

Worldview: The fundamental cognitive orientation of an individual or society encompassing the entirety of the individual's or society's knowledge and point of view.

Cognitive: Of, relating to, being, or involving conscious intellectual activity (such as thinking, reasoning, or remembering)

REPORT:

WHAT IS TRUTH?

Webster defines "truth" as that state of being the case, fact, the body of real things, events, and facts, actuality. It also refers to truth as things which are accepted as true. This would mean that to some people, false things would be truth to them because they accept them as true.

Our "worldview" is influenced by what we have seen and learned and has

developed into what we consider right or wrong. It is generally OUR point of view.

Consider 4 individuals:

1. A strict constructionist church of Christ member (closely follows "speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent")
2. A devout Catholic
3. A Muslim
4. An atheist

Consider what each of these individuals considers the source of or highest truth:

1. CofC member: the Bible
2. Catholic: The Pope
3. Muslim: The Koran
4. Atheist: What a scientist says



Now consider what each of these individuals understand to be the truth on the subject of baptism:

1. CofC Member: Baptism of consenting adults by immersion is required.
2. Catholic: Sprinkling or pouring of infants is acceptable.
3. Muslim: Not required.
4. Atheist: Not a consideration.

Each of these conflicting points of view are "truth" to that person from their worldview. For a practical view, consider the global warming cartoon on the previous page.

Today, many people believe there is or there is not man made global warming depending on who they consider to be their authority figure in this area.

The preceding would indicate that there is no real absolute truth, but it is relative to who you consider to be your authority figure.

There are 2 facts we know. (1) A supernatural event happened for our universe to exist. (2) A high degree of intelligent design was used to design the systems we see all around us. There are no credible alternatives to those truths.

WHO OR WHAT IS THIS SUPERNATURAL FORCE?

THERE ARE 2 FACTS WE KNOW:
A supernatural event happened for our universe to exist.
A high degree of intelligent design was used to design the systems we see all around us.

To start with, you need to identify the supernatural force which brought the Universe into existence. (A), so it will take other criteria to determine who or what it is. We do not see miraculous proofs being performed today (B). Candidates for considering to be this supernatural force may choose to display "himself" in different

ways, but consider the following as potential proofs:

NEXT QUESTION: WHO OR WHAT IS THIS SUPERNATURAL FORCE WHICH CREATED US WITH ALL THIS INTELLIGENT DESIGN?

- (1) An explanation of the creation,
- (2) A statement that the writer knew he was starting a religion instead of it later becoming a religion,
- (3) Some extra-human demonstration of knowledge or power (special knowledge or prophecies), and
- (4) A lifestyle of the discloser compatible with the teachings.

Jehovah and Jesus are claimants to be the creator of the Universe and source of religious knowledge. Jehovah and Jesus readily identified themselves as creators of the Universe and deities.

NEXT QUESTION: HAS THIS SUPERNATURAL FORCE COMMUNICATED WITH US?

The Bible is their communication to us, and although not a scientific book, it has some scientific knowledge. Proof of text scientific statements are made which contemporaries of the writers would not have expected to have known. Examples are "hangs the earth on nothing", "circle of the earth", "paths of the sea", and "singing of the

NEXT QUESTION: DOES HE EXPECT ANYTHING FROM US IN RETURN?

NEXT QUESTION: IS THERE A CONSEQUENCE FOR IGNORING THIS SUPERNATURAL FORCE?

stars" (C).

The New Testament fulfilled the Old Testament and has the instructions we are to follow today. It also gives proof of text scientific statements. Examples are atomic sized particles and atomic energy (D).

Jesus' lifestyle on earth was exemplary, to the point of dying on a cross for our sins.

What are the **other claimants** to be the creator of heavens and the earth and the true deity? To be a legitimate claimant rather than the teachings of a wise man which became a religion, as stated before we would expect (1) an explanation of the creation, (2) a statement this the writer knew he was starting a religion instead of it later becoming a religion, (3) some extra-human demonstration of knowledge or power, (4) a lifestyle of the discloser compatible with the teachings (5) or provide some other indication.

Given these requirements, there are no other credible claimants. Alternative claimants from Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Jainism, and Confucianism exist (E). Each of these are teachings of a philosopher with no explanation of how we got here or any scientific statements for proof of their credibility. That is no of question the sincerity or faith of any of the followers of these groups. However, the Great Commission says we need to help them get prepared for Judgment Day.

Atheistic evolution depends on a miracle to get started, and a bigger miracle to start life. It is therefore not scientific, it is simply the lack of God. It is based on so much belief in the impossible, it is its own form of religion (F).

The primary "Christian" based group teaching an ongoing revelation (beyond the Bible) is the Catholic Church. It has a serious history of complete reversals of what they are teaching is truth and of teachings which simply conflict with the scriptures (G). Denominations of "Christianity" are divided by which parts of the Bible they decide to follow (H).

HAS THE SUPERNATURAL FORCE COMMUNICATED WITH US?

For the purpose of this discussion, we have now settled on Jehovah and Jesus as the supernatural force. As was stated above The Old Testament and New Testament are the communication we presently have from Jehovah and Jesus. They have communicated with us.

DO JEHOVAH AND JESUS EXPECT ANYTHING OF US?

As Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament, we are presently under whatever the New Testament teaches. Whereas the New Testament is characterized as "love", we have received some specific instructions via the New Testament. The Great Commission and Acts 2:38 are a couple of good examples.

WE HAVE SOME SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO FOLLOW

IS THERE A CONSEQUENCE OF IGNORING JEHOVAH AND JESUS?

The Old Testament is repleat with examples of laws given, people following them or not, and God's judgment. The Garden of Eden, the flood, Sodom & Gomorrah, the golden calf, and Uzzah are good examples. (I) He appears to be serious. The Old Testament has numerous examples of people not following the instructions of Jehovah and judgment rendered.

The New Testament is primarily instructions given, our reactions, and future judgments. However, there are enough judgments in the New Testament to see the seriousness of God's judgment. Consider Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10) and Gal. 5:4 Galatians 5:4 "You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace."

These people weren't in rebellion making up their own personal religion, they were still trying to follow God's old law. Can you expect any better judgment if you refuse to follow the New Testament instructions and do instead what seems good to you?

This is to emphasize that if you depend the authority figures in any of these religious groups and as for the truth in their point of view, you will get a variety of conflicting answers. A variety of contrary "truths".

The logical conclusion to this is that Jehovah and Jesus revealed their word to us in the Bible. You need to personally read it and see what is communicated to you. You need to follow it and not what someone else tells you it says. Then you need to assure others that the only "truth" we can depend upon when we get to God's Judgment Day, is His word. We will not be

judged by what your authority figure told you, but what the Bible Says.

CONCLUSION:

There is ultimately truth in religion and a key plank in accomplishing the Great Commission is being able to communicate what the truth is in a way that it is understood to be true by the listener. You need to study and convince yourself of God's truth, and then convince others.

We cannot overemphasize that you need to listen to the advise of your authority figures, but then study the Bible. You will be judged at judgment day on what the Bible says, not what your authority figure thought it said.

**YOU WILL BE JUDGED ON
JUDGMENT DAY BY WHAT THE
BIBLE SAYS, NOT WHAT YOU
WISHED IT SAID OR WHAT
SOMEONE ELSE SAID IT SAYS!**

- (A) "We know that the supernatural force does not talk to us personally at this time": There are sincere Christians and members of other religions who understand that "God" has talked to them personally. As we will conclude that (1) Jehovah, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are the only true deities and (2) current Christian "revelations" are indistinguishable from current "revelations" of other religions, we would understand them to be within the ordinary workings of God's creation. We would understand them to be subjective, unverifiable, and unrepeatable.
- (B) "We do not see miraculous proofs being performed today": There are sincere Christians and members of other religions who believe they have seen a miracle. Many consider any good fortune in their lives to indicate a direct intervention in their lives by God. As we will conclude that (1) Jehovah, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are the only true deities and (2) current Christian "miracles" are indistinguishable from current "miracles" of other religions, we would understand them to be within the ordinary workings of God's creation. We would understand them to be subjective, unverifiable, and unrepeatable.
- (C) <https://www.thearray.org> / The Christian Array / 07 Histories / 7.2.1
- (D) <https://www.thearray.org> / The Christian Array / 07 Histories / 7.2.2
- (E) <https://www.thearray.org> / The Christian Array / 02 Array of Gods
- (F) <https://www.thearray.org> / The Christian Array / 01 Impossible for Evolution
- (G) <https://www.thearray.org> / The Christian Array / 11 Innovation Array / 11.6.3
- (H) <https://www.thearray.org> / The Christian Array / 11 Innovation Array
- (I) <https://www.thearray.org> / The Christian Array / 04 Simple Plan / 4.3