

What is Truth & Why does it Matter?

1. Consider the Uniqueness & Trustworthiness of Jesus Christ

- **the irony of His humility:** Why have so many millions of people including some non-Christians admired Jesus for His humility when He never asked God for forgiveness, never asked for wise counsel, declared other people forgiven of their sins, and said everyone on the side of truth listens to His voice? His humility only makes sense if He is God the Son and Lord of all. Otherwise, He was very prideful, and not someone we should turn to for the truth.
- **the evidence for His resurrection:** If He really rose from the dead, then Jesus is certainly unique & trustworthy, and His claims about truth are more than worth a hearing.

Questions to consider if His resurrection was a lie (made up story):

- Where was the body? The tomb was secure/guarded by soldiers.
- Why were women (whose testimony wasn't valid) the first eye-witnesses?
- What produced the radical change in the disciples?
- How could they have held a lie together? Modern day example: the Watergate scandal (see *Loving God*, by Chuck Colson).

2. Consider the Reliability of Scripture

● Some examples of external evidence

- **the accuracy of the OT:** Found in 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls are manuscript copies of portions of the OT that are 1000yrs older than the copies we had been using, but were 99% identical. This shows the accuracy of how the OT was copied over time (*How We Got the Bible*, by John Sailhamer; and "Why do Christians Care about Qumran & the Dead Sea Scrolls" from www.thegospelcoalition.org).
- **the accuracy of the NT:** we have more manuscript copies of the NT than any other ancient document (numbers continue to rise). In 1990 we had about 24,000 copies of portions of the NT (5300 in Greek); Homer's *Iliad* ranked 2nd with 643 copies. Current estimates for the *Iliad* are c. 2000 copies; and over 5700 NT Greek copies, & over 24,000 copies total (*A Ready Defense* by Josh McDowell; and "An Interview with Daniel B. Wallace on the New Testament Manuscripts" from www.thegospelcoalition.org).

- **Personal testimony & professional sources:** Personal: millions of believers past/present ("Know Your Evangelicals: Charles Colson" by Joe Carter); History: Jewish Historian Josephus wrote about Jesus (*The New Testament Documents: Are they Reliable?* by F.F. Bruce; see also *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, by Craig Blomberg); Science: Irreducible complexity and the need for a Creator (*The God Who is There*, by D.A. Carson).

● Some examples of internal evidence

- **fulfilled prophecy:** Isaiah 53: Christ's sufferings prophesied. Daniel 7: 4 kingdoms prophesied: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Alexander the Great (divided 4 ways), & the Roman Empire.
- **the accuracy of Luke's writings:** Luke 1:1-4
The New Testament Documents: Are they Reliable? by F.F. Bruce
- **Multiple eye-witness testimony:** Christianity is based on multiple eye-witnesses, while Islam is based on one (Muhammad).

3. Consider Christ's Message of Truth

● Everyone on the side of truth listens to His voice: where do you stand?

● Believe in Jesus Christ: the great I am

- I am the bread of life: 6:35 (the I am's in the book of John)
- I am the light of the world: 8:12
- I am the gate/good shepherd: 10:9ff
- I am the resurrection & the life: 11:25
- I am the way, truth & the life: 14:6
- I am the true vine: 15:1

4. Conclusion

- **The gospel is God-glorifying, Christ-centered & Spirit-empowered:** self-glorifying, self-centered, & self-reliant humans could not have made this up.
- **Knowing the truth matters because our eternity is hanging in the balance:** What is truth? The truth is a person: Jesus Christ. Knowing truth rises out of knowing God, which matters because knowing Christ transforms our lives now, & our response to His truth in this life determines our eternal destiny.