

Proof of the Message!

Truth - how do we know it? Many claim that mathematics and science lead us to objective truth. Mathematics is black and white in its answers. Science has put men on the moon, built computers, invented the automobile, created cellular phones, and discovered many other wonders. Yet, science cannot claim to be absolutely objective when it comes to truth. In 2000, the Forbes ASAP publication presented one article after another regarding the truthfulness and dependability of science. The concluding article had this to say about science, "It's too easy, with the benefit of modernity, hindsight, and all that, to regard science as the most fearless, objective, apolitical, democratic, and open-minded of human endeavors - the seeker of truth." The author, James Burke, goes on to show that science has changed its theories again and again, each time admitting the old "scientific truth" was in error. Scientific truth - theories - depends on the intelligence of men.

QUOTING TRUTH. Increasingly, just like the author James Burke, many are realizing that science does not really have all the answers. Some are seeking truth in the supernatural: premonitions, clairvoyance, astral projection, astrology, tarot cards, witches, and ghosts. They are finding a new world. But how do we recognize truth? Is it determined by a person's educational degrees and theories? Is it determined by the power and mysteries in the supernatural? The closest measure of truth that we have is found in the Bible - consistent, accurate, long range prophetic predictions backed by supernatural events. These are true of the Old Testament, a book proven by 1,817 fulfilled prophecies (27 percent of the Bible), verifiable historical events and ancient testimony of actual signs and miracles.

The Jewish Christians to whom the book of Hebrews was written were forgetting truth - the faithful Old Testament scriptures. That is why the first chapter of Hebrews refers them back to selected scriptures that pointed them to Jesus, to passages that reminded them that Jesus is called "My Son," "the first-born," "God," and "Lord," and to passages that reminded them that Jesus would be worshiped by the angels and that angels are only ministers of God. Why was this necessary? They were forgetting truth and so they were beginning to respect the angels more than Jesus.

THEREFORE. The angels are inferior to Jesus. This was the real point some of these believers had forgotten. So the

Spirit warns them to really listen to Jesus since they believed the words of the angels were truth.

For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? . . . (NASB) Hebrews 2:1-2

The English misses the meaning of the Greek. The words "pay much closer attention" is the Greek word *prosecho* which means "to hold on to," or "to bring to the dock." The last Greek word in the verse is *pararreo* meaning "to slip away." These are navy terms. The word picture the Spirit paints is of a boat slipping away from the dock and out to sea. These Hebrew Christians were in danger of slipping away from Jesus and back to Judaism. So they are encouraged to keep on hanging on to the dock - hanging on to what they had heard.

Why? Both Acts and Galatians reveal that the angels in some way helped give the law to Moses. We do not know exactly what they said or did, but Hebrews says the angels spoke words when they gave the law.

Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels . . . (NASB) Gal. 3:19 . . . you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet

did not keep it.” (NASB) Acts 7:53

Those who either willfully or unknowingly violated the words given by the angels were punished or disciplined. Why should we listen to Jesus? The Old Testament scriptures point to Jesus and He has spoken.

A Christian some years ago told me that truth was determined by my experience. He went on to say that was how he concluded God was real. So I asked, “When a Mormon, Jehovah’s Witness, Hare Krishna, or some other cult member tells me that god has answered their prayer, changed their life, saved their marriage, should I believe in their god?” Is truth determined by personal experience? The answer is obvious. Truth is not subjective. We need to hang on to the dock - the proven, sacred scriptures.

After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will. (NASB) Hebrews 2:3-4

Jesus came with a new teaching and power and so did His apostles. Notice the phrase, “by those who heard.” Those who heard were those who heard Jesus. The apostles are the ones who clearly qualify. God proved they spoke truth by performing miracles, signs, and wonders by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His

His Rags Were Enough

Dr. Bernardo, a great friend of homeless children, tells a story of how a dirty, half-clothed child hailed him in the street one day with a request to be taken in to one of his home.

"I know nothing about you, lad." said the doctor. "Why should I take you in?"

"I thought these would be enough." said the little boy, pointing to his heavily worn clothes.

At that, Dr. Bernardo picked him up in his arms and took him in.

- A. Naismith

PROOF BY SIGNS. When Jesus came to live among humans, He came with words of truth and signs and wonders. He fulfilled the Jewish expectation that Messiah would come with a new teaching and power, just as Moses did (Deut. 34:10-12). The gospel of Mark (Mark 1:21-28) tells us that is exactly what Jesus did. He came with a new teaching and power or authority.

And they were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him. (NASB) Mark 1:27

grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands. (NASB) Acts 14:3

Jesus was a person of history. Many ancient prophecies pointed to Him. He really existed, and He came with signs, wonders, miracles, and the Holy Spirit’s gifts. These were stamps of God’s approval on Jesus’ life, His ministry and His apostles who delivered the message.

CONCLUSION. Jesus’ message was about a great salvation - a salvation from our sins that only requires we do not depend on ourselves to gain God’s favor. This salvation means we believe, trust or depend on Jesus to forgive our sins. Here is the message of the great salvation,

So the author of Hebrews finally reminds them,

. . . that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day
according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas,
then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five
hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now . .
. (NASB) 1 Corinthians 15:3-6

The message is simple. All we need to do is to come like a
sinner with a repentant heart - Jesus expects you to come like
this - and then depend on Him!