

# Truth and Reason

Speaking the Words of Truth and Reason ♦ Acts 26:25

Volume I

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Number 1

## The Value Of Truth

**A**S JESUS STOOD BEFORE HIM, Pontius Pilate derisively asked Him, "What is truth?" (John 18: 38). In the previous verse, Jesus had said that His mission in coming to the earth was to "bear witness to the truth," thus prompting Pilate's question.

"What is truth and why is it so valuable that Jesus gave up heaven and came to earth to bear witness to it?" are questions worthy of our consideration. Even though Pilate was not sincere when he posed his question, we must be for our attitude toward truth determines our eternal destiny.

### "What Is Truth?"

Truth is the veritable essence of a matter. When it comes to life, God is truth for He is the fountain of life. He is man's creator. Being divine, truth is His nature. Hebrews 6:18 says it is impossible for Him to lie. When Jesus said He came to bear witness of the truth (John 18:37), it was to bear witness of God. The apostle Paul condemned the Gentiles because they had "exchanged the truth of God for a lie" (Romans 1:25).

In bearing witness of God, Jesus bore witness of Himself for

He is God (Matthew 1:23). Being God, He claimed to be "the truth" (John 14:6). Ephesians 4:21 states that "truth is in Jesus."

As He prayed to the Father in behalf of His disciples, Jesus identified the word of God as truth (John 17:17). Since God by nature cannot lie, whatever He speaks is truth. Since Jesus is God's exclusive spokesman today (Hebrews 1:1-2), His word, the gospel, is truth. Galatians 2:5 says that the apostle Paul and his companions did not yield to false brethren in order that the "truth of the gospel might continue with you."

We can therefore conclude that truth originated with God, was manifested in and borne witness to by His Son and is found today in His word, the gospel.

### "Why Is Truth So Valuable?"

There are many reasons the truth of God, the gospel, is very valuable. The following are but representative of a much longer list.

- Truth makes one free from sin. John 8:31-32, recording the words of Jesus, states, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." When one

believes the truth of God as revealed in the gospel (John 8:24) and acts upon that belief by being obedient to the commands of God for the salvation of the soul (Romans 6:17-18), he is freed from the guilt of his sins and the penalty for them (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:23).

- Truth sanctifies a person—sets him apart from the worldly and puts him in fellowship with God (John 17:17). To belong to God and be an heir to His promises, one must believe and obey His truth.

- Truth purifies one's soul (1 Peter 1:22). With his obedience to the truth, one has all his sins remitted and he becomes sinless and pure in the eyes of God.

- Truth saves one eternally (James 1:21). Every person needs to heed the advice James gives in this passage and become a humble recipient of the word of God. One receives the word by being both a "hearer" and a "doer" of it (James 1:25), i.e., he believes what the word says and obeys what it commands.

### Conclusion

Is the truth of God valuable to you? If so, you need to live by it. Why not start living by it today? ♦

Gene Taylor

# The Place Of Reason In Religion

**M**ANY PEOPLE VIEW THE Bible as some mystical book whose message cannot be understood. Therefore, they fail to use the same reasoning they apply in studying other books and disciplines. They approach its study in a special way. The Bible, though, should be treated with the same logic and common sense as any ordinary, intelligent writing for, though it is from God, its message is conveyed in the same way that men communicate with one another.

## The Bible Is Reasonable

God, in the Bible, places great emphasis on the reasonable nature of Himself and His word. Consider the following passages.

- Isaiah 1:18. "Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord."
- Acts 24:25. As the apostle Paul taught the word of God, this passage says "he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come."
- Acts 26:25. Paul in reference to God's word he had just spoken said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason."
- Acts 18:4,19. Speaking of the labors of Paul as he taught God's word among the Gentiles these verses state, "And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks" (v. 4). "And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself

entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews" (v. 19).

- Acts 19:8-9. Also speaking of Paul's work among the Gentiles, this passage says, "And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus."

## Reason's Place In Study

All of the above passages show how important reason is in God's word. It is also important for us to use reason in studying it. There are two areas of Bible study in which reason is needed.

- To determine from evidence that the Bible is the word of God. Two general areas of evidence exist—external and internal. External evidence is that testimony from sources outside the Bible which offers proof that the Bible is God's word. Internal evidence is that supporting proof from within the text of the Bible itself. If one is going to profit from either of these areas of evidence, he must employ reason, logic and common sense as he considers the proof they give.
- To employ its powers in order to understand the Bible. As previously stated, since the message of the Bible is communicated in the same way men communicate with one

another, the same reason, logic and common sense used to understand the communications of other men must be used to understand God's communication to man.

## Violations Of Reason Which Cause Misunderstanding

**Prejudice.** A spirit of bias and partiality is found in many men and women. One must be objective in viewing the Bible if he is ever going to understand it. One who allows prejudice to color his view of it will never arrive at its true message.

**Preconceived opinions.** One must go to the Bible to obtain doctrine not to sustain it.

**Generalizations.** Some make sweeping generalizations about the Bible without ever having really studied it.

**Appeals to popular thought.** Citing what the majority thinks as being conclusive evidence of right is never a proper practice. Even if all the people in the world thought the Bible to be false and its teachings erroneous, it stands as the truth because it is the word of God and it is impossible for God to lie (Hebrews 6: 18). Romans 3:4 states, "let God be true but every man a liar."

## Conclusion

The Bible is a reasonable book from a reasonable God. He expects us to use reason in arriving at the truth He has placed within the Scriptures. May you be blessed in your study of it. 🙏

**Gene Taylor**



# Genesis

## I. General Data

- A. Name: Genesis.
1. "Genesis" is a Greek word meaning "origins; source; or generations."
  2. Genesis is a book of beginnings. It records the beginnings of:
    - a. The world (ch. 1).
    - b. Mankind (ch. 1-2).
    - c. The home (2:18-25).
    - d. Sin (ch. 3)
    - e. Death (ch. 3)
    - f. Redemptive process (3:15).
    - g. Nations (ch. 10).
    - h. Diversity of languages (ch. 11).
    - i. Israel as God's chosen people (ch. 12).
    - j. The covenant of circumcision (ch. 17).
  3. Genesis versus the Book of Revelation: "Sunrise to Sunset."
    - a. Genesis answers the question, "How did it all begin?" Revelation answers the question, "How will it all end?"
    - b. In Genesis, access to the tree of life is lost (3:24). In Revelation, access to the tree of life is attained through Christ (22:14).
    - c. In Genesis there is the beginning of sorrow and death (3:16-19). In Revelation there will be no more death (21:4).
    - d. In Genesis, evil triumphs through the serpent (3:13). In Revelation there is the ultimate triumph of the Lamb (20:10).
    - e. In Genesis, the walk of God with man is interrupted (3:8-10). That walk is resumed in Revelation (21:3).
    - f. In Genesis, sin is seen in its beginnings. In Revelation, sin is seen in its full development in the Harlot, the False Prophet, the Beast, and the Dragon.
    - g. In Genesis, the sentence of condemnation is passed on Satan. In Revelation, that sentence is executed.
    - h. In Genesis is the first promise of a coming Savior. In Revelation, that promise is seen in its glorious fulfillment.
    - i. Genesis causes anticipation and anxiety. Revelation gives hope and assurance.
    - j. Genesis is the foundation stone of the Bible. Revelation is the capstone laid at the very apex to indicate completeness.
- B. Author: Moses.
1. Moses is generally accepted as author because of the continuity of style and material of the Pentateuch—"a five volume book."
  2. Moses is the central figure of the Pentateuch and is represented in it as writing certain parts of it (cf. Ex. 17:14; 24:4-8; Num. 33:1-2; Deut. 31:9,22,24; John 5:46; 7:19; Luke 16:31).
- C. Time span: Creation to the death of Joseph.
- D. Theme: "The Divine Sovereignty of God."
1. Four outstanding events which reflect the sovereignty of God (ch. 1-11).
    - a. The creation. Divine sovereignty in the physical creation. God's eternal priority.
    - b. The fall. Divine sovereignty in human probation. God's moral authority.
    - c. The flood. Divine sovereignty in historical retribution. God's judicial severity.
    - d. The Babel crisis. Divine sovereignty in social distribution. God's governmental supremacy.
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2. Four outstanding persons which reflect the sovereignty of God (ch. 12-50).
    - a. Abraham. Divine sovereignty in a supernatural call.
    - b. Isaac. Divine sovereignty in a supernatural birth.
    - c. Jacob. Divine sovereignty in a supernatural care.
    - d. Joseph. Divine sovereignty in a supernatural control.
  - E. Ways to study Genesis.
    1. Biographically. The book is rich in character studies.
    2. Spiritually.
      - a. No book is richer in spiritual values and lessons.
      - b. Many of the examples of faith found in Hebrews 11 come from Genesis.
    3. Prophetically. It prophetically deals with Christ, the nation of Israel, and many other prophecies.
    4. Typically. Many personalities, events, and things in Genesis typify others which were to come.
      - a. Adam. A type of Christ (Rom. 5:14).
      - b. Salvation of Noah. A type of our salvation (I Pet. 3:21).
      - c. Ishmael and Isaac. Typify two covenants (Gal. 4:22-31).
      - d. Melchizedek. Type of Christ (Heb. 7).
  - F. A Summary: "The first eleven chapters deal with mankind; his creation, fall, the flood which destroyed the race—except for Noah and his family—and the diversion of the world subsequent to the flood. These chapters are the introduction to the main theme of the book, the call of Abraham and God's dealings with him and his "seed" or descendants...The history contained in scripture is never a bare recital of facts. It always has a purpose. Many facts are omitted, particularly those which do not have a bearing on the purpose of the writer. Because the purposes of God centered in the nation of Israel, the early history of mankind is outlined with a view to its bearing on the call of Abraham. The great nations of antiquity are mentioned as their histories and destinies are related to Israel. We can learn much about the Sumerians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, and the Hittites, from extra-Biblical sources. The Bible, however, is a history of God's purposes concerning Abraham's "seed." Ultimately, blessing comes through that seed to "all the family of the earth," but that part of the promise to Abraham is in the distant future as we study Genesis" (*The Book of Genesis*, Charles Pfeiffer; Baker Book House; pp. 5-6).

## II. An Outline of Genesis

- A. Primeval history of mankind (ch. 1-11).
    1. The creation (1:1 - 2:25).
    2. The fall (3:1-24).
    3. Adam and Eve's descendants (4:1 - 5:32).
      - a. Cain murders Abel (4:1-24).
      - b. Seth (4:25-26).
      - c. Descendants of Adam (5:1-32).
    4. Noah and the Flood (6:1 - 10:32).
    5. Tower of Babel (11:1-9).
    6. Descendants of Shem (11:10-32).
  - B. Patriarchal History of Israel (ch. 12-50).
    1. Abraham (12:1 - 25:10).
      - a. Abram inherits Canaan (ch. 13).
        - 1) Strife with Lot.
        - 2) Lot's captivity and rescue (ch. 14).
      - b. God's covenant with Abram (ch. 15).
        - 1) Hagar and Ishmael. Abram tries to help God (ch. 16).
        - 2) Circumcision. Sign of the covenant (18:1-15).
      - c. Destruction of Sodom (18:16 - 19:38).
      - d. Abraham and Abimelech (ch. 20).
      - e. The birth of Isaac (ch. 21).
      - f. Abraham's faith tested (ch. 22).
      - g. Abraham and Sarah die (ch. 23-25).
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2. Isaac (25:11 - 28:9).
    - a. Marries Rebekah (ch. 24).
    - b. Jacob and Esau born (25:19-34).
    - c. Isaac and Abimelech (ch. 26).
    - d. Jacob tricks Isaac then flees (27:1 - 28:9).
  3. Jacob (28:10 - 36:43).
    - a. Jacob's dream at Bethel (28:10-22).
    - b. Jacob works for Laban (29:1 - 30:43).
    - c. Jacob flees from Laban (ch. 31).
    - d. Jacob and Esau meet again (32:1 - 33:17).
    - e. Trouble in Shechem over Dinah (33:18 - 34:31).
    - f. Rachel and Isaac die (ch. 35).
    - g. Family of Esau (ch. 36).
  4. Joseph (ch. 37-50).
    - a. Sold into slavery (ch. 37).
    - b. Judah and Tamar (ch. 38).
    - c. Joseph in Egypt (ch. 39-44).
    - d. Jacob's family moves to Goshen (ch. 45-47).
    - e. Jacob's final words to his sons (48:1 - 50:14).
    - f. Joseph's last days (50:15-26).

### **III. The Lessons of Genesis**

#### **A. The existence of God.**

1. Genesis does not argue but simply affirms the existence of God.
2. The atheist fails to realize and/or admit that nothing comes from nothing.
3. Since something now is, something has always been
4. Life does not come from non-life. Design demands a designer.

#### **B. The character of God.**

1. God is creator, lawgiver, judge, provider, covenant-maker, and fulfiller of promises.
2. His love, mercy, understanding of man's plight, and willingness to help are all illustrated in Genesis.
3. On the other hand, no book better shows the importance of heeding the authority of God than Genesis.
4. Since God's character is righteous and holy, He desires His people to be the same.

#### **C. The doctrine of man.**

1. Genesis says there is something special about man (1:26-17).
2. Man is not just physical but also spiritual with a moral nature, freedom, and intelligence.
3. Genesis teaches man is under the rule of God and accountable to Him.
4. Man is the object of God's love and, thus, can be redeemed.

#### **D. The nature of sin.**

1. Adam and Eve chose to sin.
2. Every person who sins makes that same choice.
3. Genesis teaches sin is deceptive and accompanied by consequences.

#### **E. The blessing of faith.**

1. God has always required man to have faith.
2. He has always provided good evidences which develop and sustain faith.
3. Genesis illustrates the nature of faith: the faith that God blesses is the faith which obeys.
4. In Genesis, Abraham is called the father of the faithful (Rom. 4).

#### **F. The faithful remnant.**

1. God has always had a remnant who were faithful.
  2. Even in wicked times there was always an Abel, an Enoch, a Noah and an Abraham.
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# Genesis Study Questions

1. What was already in existence even before “the beginning?”
  2. How did the world come into existence?
  3. What was created on the:
    - a. First day?
    - b. Second day?
    - c. Third day?
    - d. Fourth day?
    - e. Fifth day?
    - f. Sixth day?
  4. Why did God make a woman? What role did God plan for her?
  5. How did Adam and Eve sin? What were some consequences of their sin?
  6. Why did Cain kill Abel? (cf. 1 John 3:11-12) What was Cain’s punishment?
  7. In the time of Noah:
    - a. How bad had the human race gotten?
    - b. How did God feel about the situation?
    - c. What did God decide to do?
  8. Why did Noah find favor with God? How was he different from the rest of the people?
  9. What did God command Noah to do? Why? What did Noah’s obedience show?
  10. As seen in the eleventh chapter, why did the people want to build a city and tower? What did God do in response to their efforts? What was wrong with this project and why did it displease God?
  11. Who was Abraham? What three-fold promise did God make to him?
  12. Cite some ways in which Abraham’s faith was tested.
  13. Who was Lot? Why did he and Abraham have to separate? Where did he choose to go?
  14. Why were the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed? How were they destroyed? Who was spared? Why?
  15. Who was Isaac? Describe the peculiar circumstances of his birth.
  16. Who were Jacob and Esau? What did Esau sell to Jacob? Why?
  17. Name the sons of Jacob. What people are their descendants?
  18. Why did his brothers hate Joseph? What did their hatred motivate them to do to him?
  19. How did Joseph end up in Egypt?
  20. Why was Joseph cast into prison?
  21. Whose dreams did Joseph interpret while in prison?
  22. How did Joseph come to interpret Pharaoh’s dream? What was that dream? What was its interpretation?
  23. As a result of interpreting Pharaoh’s dream, what position was Joseph given?
  24. How did Joseph come to be reunited with his brothers? How did he treat them? What did Pharaoh invite them and their father to do?
  25. What conclusion did Joseph reach concerning all that had happened to him?
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# Can Christ's Church Exist Today?

**G**OD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE was revealed when Jesus said, "on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Christ was to have a universal church composed of citizens of all the earth (Mark 16:15).

Less than one year after He promised to build His church, Jesus was betrayed, condemned, crucified, and entombed. Three days later, though, He was raised from the dead (Luke 24:1-35). By His resurrection He overcame death, but more than that, He proclaimed the beginning of a new, glorious age that had been planned by God.

In the city of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, an annual Jewish feast, Christ's apostles proclaimed, for the first time, the wonderful news "...that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Jews of every nation under heaven were present. They had been guilty of clamoring for the death of Jesus, therefore, "...when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 2:37-38).

On that Pentecost, saved

people were added together (Acts 2:41) to the church (Acts 2:47). Therefore, the church is the body of those people who have been saved by the gospel, God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16). Christ's church, the saved, has now been in existence for about 2000 years and *it exists today* even as we have just entered the twenty-first century.

We are striving to be a part of that church. Our hope is in "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," the only hope of salvation (1 Corinthians 2:1-3). He is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9).

We look to no other creed or doctrine for salvation for our only creed is Christ (Matthew 16:16) and His New Testament (Jude 3). We plead with people to surrender their lives to Jesus by obeying His gospel.

In the gospel Jesus taught that one cannot be saved from his sins without faith in Him as the Son of God (John 8:24). He further stated that one must admit his sin and repent — turn from sin and evil and turn to God (Luke 13:3). He then declared "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16).

**YES, It Can  
And Does!**

When we meet as a congregation of His people, our services are simple. We do only those things God has authorized.

- We sing songs of praise and edification (Eph. 5:19).
- We pray (1 Thess. 5:17).
- We partake of the Lord's Supper every Lord's Day in order to remember the loving sacrifice of our Savior (1 Cor. 11:23-30; Acts 20:7).

- We give freely of our means (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
- We give and receive instruction in the word of God (Acts 17:11).
- All of these are done in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

We are a dedicated group of Bible-believing people who are trying our best to conform our lives to the will of God and the image of Christ in all things. We accept the Scriptures as our only authority in religious matters. We are free from manmade religious laws. We are not members of any denomination. We are content to just be *Christians*. We practice the unity for which Jesus prayed (John 17:20-21).

Interested? My friend, Jesus died so that you could be fully cleansed of your sins and be saved but if you fail to obey Him you will be lost eternally (2 Thess. 1:7-9). Why not obey His gospel so that you can be added by Jesus to His church — the body of the saved? ✠

**Gene Taylor**

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