

# Jesus Asserts His Deity

John 8:12-30

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**Introduction:** Let's talk for a moment about truth. How do you know what is true? What does it mean for something to "BE TRUE?" We hear a lot of rhetoric in our day that sounds something like this..."This is my truth." or "You need to find out what is true for you." It is comforting to people to believe that absolutely no one knows the truth. Why? Because then you can never be wrong and what you believe can never be false. Would you like to never be wrong or never believe something that is false? Of course! This is the attraction of Relativism or Post Modernism.

## What Truth Is Not!

- Truth is *not* simply whatever works. This is the philosophy of pragmatism – an ends-vs.-means-type approach. In reality, lies can appear to "work," but they are still lies and not the truth.
  - Truth is *not* simply what everybody say is true. A group of people can get together and form a conspiracy based on a set of falsehoods where they all agree to tell the same false story, but it does not make their presentation true.
  - Truth is *not* what makes people feel good. Really bad news can be true.
  - Truth is *not* what the majority believes. Fifty-one percent of a group can reach a wrong conclusion.
  - Truth is *not* what is comprehensive. A lengthy, detailed presentation can still result in a false conclusion.
  - Truth is *not* defined by what is intended. Good intentions can still be wrong.
  - Truth is *not* whatever you believe. A lie believed is still not true.
  - Truth is *not* what is publicly known. A truth can be privately known (for example, the location of buried treasure).

Here are the main opponents to absolute truth:

**Relativism** says that all truth is relative and that there is no such thing as absolute truth. But is this claim itself a relative truth or an absolute truth? If it is a relative truth, then perhaps it is not applicable to the question of truth. If it is an absolute claim, then absolute truth does exist and relativism is disproved. Moreover, the relativist betrays his own position when he states that the position of the absolutist is wrong – why can't those who say absolute truth exists be correct too? In essence, when the relativist says, "There

is no truth," he is asking you not to believe him, and the best thing to do is follow his advice.

**Skepticism** simply doubts all truth. But he is not skeptical of skepticism; he does not doubt his own truth claim? The skeptic is absolutely sure of at least one thing.....skepticism, which, ironically, becomes absolute truth for the skeptic. The agnostic says you can't know the truth, but in so doing claims to know at least one truth: No one can know truth.

**Postmodernism** simply affirm no particular truth. BUT....The Post modernist continually affirms at least one absolute truth: No truth should ever be affirmed. Postmodernism is self-defeating and cannot stand up under its own claim.

**Pluralism** asserts that all truth claims are equally valid. Question: Can two claims – one that says a woman is now pregnant and another that says she is not now pregnant – both be true at the same time? Pluralism unravels at the feet of the law of non-contradiction, which says that something cannot be both "A" and "Non-A" at the same time and in the same sense. One unnamed philosopher has said that "anyone who believes that the law of non-contradiction is not true (ie. A pluralist) should be beaten and burned until they admit that to be beaten and burned is not the same thing as to not be beaten and burned. Pluralism says that it is true and everything else is false, thus disproving its own tenant.

Jesus made absolute truth claims which provoked the confrontation we find in our text today. Let me read it to you now:

**John 8:13-30** <sup>13</sup> So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true." <sup>14</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. <sup>15</sup> "You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. <sup>16</sup> "But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone *in it*, but I and the Father who sent Me. <sup>17</sup> "Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. <sup>18</sup> "I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me." <sup>19</sup> So they were saying to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also." <sup>20</sup> These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come. <sup>21</sup> Then He said again to them, "I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come." <sup>22</sup> So the Jews were saying, "Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?" <sup>23</sup> And He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. <sup>24</sup> "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins." <sup>25</sup> So they were saying to Him, "Who are You?" Jesus said to them, "What have I been saying to you *from* the beginning? <sup>26</sup> "I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world." <sup>27</sup> They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father. <sup>28</sup> So Jesus said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. <sup>29</sup> "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left

Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." <sup>30</sup> As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.

**So the Pharisees said to Him, "You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true.":** The Jews are talking to Jesus about their legal definition of truth. They have had this conversation before. There must be other witnesses. Listen to their earlier discussion. Jesus said....

**John 5:31-38** <sup>31</sup> "If I *alone* testify about Myself, My testimony is not **true.** <sup>32</sup> "There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is **true.** <sup>33</sup> "You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth. <sup>34</sup> "But the testimony which I receive is not from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. <sup>35</sup> "He was the lamp that was burning and was shining and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. <sup>36</sup> "But the testimony which I have is greater than *the testimony of* John; for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish-- the very works that I do-- testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me. <sup>37</sup> "And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. <sup>38</sup> "You do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.

Jesus made bold claims about who He was, but so did John the Baptist....So did His miracles that only God Himself could perform.....So did His Father when he spoke from heaven and even the Scripture.....which the Jews revered...Even the Old Testament Scripture bore witness that Jesus was the Christ.

**John 5:39-40** <sup>39</sup> "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; <sup>40</sup> and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.

**Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true [14a]:** The Law said that your own testimony does not prove the truth of your claims. But....and this is important.....a man's testimony can be absolutely true even if it is not corroborated by others. Jesus participated in the legal argument in chapter five, but here he speaks of absolute truth.

**I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going [14b]:** Jesus continues a claim that He began making in Chapter Seven.

**John 7:28-30** I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. <sup>29</sup> "I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me." <sup>30</sup> So they were seeking to seize Him; and no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.

He has come directly from heaven. No one but God can make that claim. Human life begins at conception, but Christ's life was eternal. It had no beginning and no end. He is God the Creator who was with God in the beginning. The Jews are ignorant of the true nature of Christ as God. He has been telling them in a variety of ways but they do not know He is from God the Father.

**You judge according to the flesh [15a]:** They are looking at this human man and making their judgments based entirely on human reason, wisdom and knowledge. This is true of all the truth theories we examined before. They categorically reject the notion that there is an absolute nature to truth. That there is truth that exists independently of what they think or feel or want.

**I am not judging anyone.** Jesus means that He is not judging anyone on the basis of what humans can see and understand. Judgment here means discernment. The ability to see the truth of things. Men use human reason and presuppose and insist that there is nothing outside of that. Jesus does not judge that way and He is not confined to human limitations and reason.

**But even if I do judge, My judgment is true:** But acknowledging the human law for a moment....even if He does make a judgment on the truth of something entirely by Himself....that judgment is true.

Now this is an assertion of deity. Jesus is saying that what He says is true whether anyone confirms it or not. Let me put this another way. What Jesus says about Himself, His nature, His power, His purpose, His past and His future are all true whether you think so or not. How can a man make such a claim? Because He is NOT a mere man. He is God....become a man. You had no say in your conception and birth, but Christ and the Father planned His down to the smallest detail. Jesus knew when He left heaven and knew exactly when and how He would return.

**Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. "I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me. [17-18]** But Jesus is still willing to help them understand using their own framework of reference. This is why it is good to still reason with men about the truth. Jesus did so and I think we can as well. We do not have blind faith. In fact, we have just the opposite. We are not limited to only our human judgment. We have come into the light of the truth of God.

**2 Corinthians 4:6** <sup>6</sup> For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

But Jesus does not just close the door of human reason and leave them in the dark. We should not do that either. As we have seen today, the discernment that men exercise concerning truth does not stand up well in the light. It sounds perfectly fine until it is challenged. If post modernism is only raged against and never challenged then it seems logical and truthful.

Jesus returns to their own way of reasoning and says....Even though I am speaking truthfully about myself there is another testimony. It is God the Father, whom you claim to know and worship.

**They were saying to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also."**

They are probably trying to insult Jesus here. A little later they came right out with the insult. They considered him an illegitimate child of Mary.

**John 8:41** <sup>41</sup> "You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God."

But...proving Christ's point, they are unwilling to listen to the testimony of John the Baptist [an approved prophet in their midst], The prophecy of their Scripture, The testimony of miracles performed by Jesus and even the voice of God from heaven which they heard at His baptism. None of this mattered to them. They sweep it all away with their human conclusion that "only what seems true to us, can be true."

**These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come [20]:** He is on the temple mount...standing before the now cold and unlit Menorahs while claiming to be the light of the world. These guys pretended they did not understand His claims, but they were getting madder and madder as He continued to make them.

**Then He said again to them, "I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come." [21]** I came from heaven and I am going back to heaven. You cannot follow me to heaven....translation??? "You are not going to heaven!" "You cannot get there from here!" "You cannot get there by the means you insist on employing!" What were those means?

- They had been chosen by God to know the truth and to receive the Messiah. They had done neither, but believed that having been chosen was enough.
- They had been given the Scripture, the priesthood, the temple and its rituals. But, they have failed to see their own God in any of them or recognize Him when He visited them.

**Romans 3:1-4** Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? <sup>2</sup> Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. <sup>3</sup> What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? <sup>4</sup> May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man *be found* a liar, as it is written, "THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED."

Paul's point here...It does not good to have the truth if you persist in putting everything through the filter of what you, humanly think is reasonable. Jesus is telling them that what they have and think will not get them to heaven and they will die in their sins. Ignoring all the assertions and dialog to this point they say...

**John 8:22** ..... "Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come?'"

**He was saying to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. [23]:** Have you ever felt like you were talking to a wall? Sure we have! Jesus is getting more and more pointed. He has taught them about

spiritual bread which is from heaven that they cannot work for but is a gift from Him. He has taught them of the water of the spirit that wells up inside of those who come to Christ. He has taught them of the light that illumines the darkness of this world. He has gone so far as to say that He has come down out of heaven.

Don't let this happen to you. Do not permit yourself to be the final authority on what is true or what is not. There is something bigger than human experience and human wisdom. Man has failed to solve his spiritual problems with earthly wisdom. Yes...we have solved many, many of our earthly problems....but earthly life ends and we are spiritual and everlasting beings. Don't be "of the earth....only."

**"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." [24]:** What is Christ's remedy for their sins? Are they called to do more, be more honest, be more religious, be more Jewish, more Christian for us? No! none of those. He calls them to believe. And what exactly are they to believe?

**Unless you believe that I am:** you will die in your sins. The word "he" is supplied and not in the Greek language. Jesus is calling them and us to believe that He is the Creator God who came down from heaven on a planned rescue mission. He became a real human man to take the place of real human sinners in death. The assertion of Christ's full deity cannot be made any stronger than this. And yet...

**John 8:25** .... they were saying to Him, "Who are You?" Jesus said to them, "What have I been saying to you *from* the beginning?"

Jesus closed this encounter by coming back to the question of truth. He has been speaking truth to them. It is absolute in nature because it comes from God and has its origin in the creator of the existing universe. God knows how everything works, He can and does create life, He heals, He understands our deepest longings and His solutions are True!!! Jesus has six more months on the earth to teach these people. He has true judgments to give to them. He means that He gives us the truth of how God regards many, many things. How does God really feel about lying, stealing, murder, hatred, malice, unforgiveness, and on and on.

**I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world. [26]:** The description of God as "He who sent Me is true" is very revealing. "True" does not mean that He tells the truth...if means that he is openly displayed. He is unconcealed now to men. What He thinks and who He is has been shown.

**John 1:9** <sup>9</sup> There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

**John 1:16-18** <sup>16</sup> For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

**CONCLUSION:** The truth controversy has gone on since the beginning. Don't make the mistake of reducing it to "believing the Bible." The Jews believed the Bible. but they did not trust God or His Son who were revealed in it. They wanted something to do or something to affirm as true. They were not interested in trusting God with the care of their physical and eternal lives. He was to be appeased or kept at bay with religion but not to be trusted. Satan instigated this with Eve and it worked.

**Genesis 3:4-5** <sup>4</sup> But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. <sup>5</sup> For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

The Cross was God's ultimate appeal to trust Him. To come and find rest in His love and mercy and grace. His own Son...who came down out of heaven, would willingly die in your place. He would become sin for you and then give you His righteous standing as your own. Truth is that which conforms to the reality of the universe. As such...Jesus is "The Truth." Truth is that which matches up to the Creator and all He created. Paul had great education, morality and religion. After meeting Christ he concluded....

**Philippians 3:7-9** <sup>7</sup> But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith-

The night that Jesus prepared to leave and to go where men cannot go....He said.....

**Luke 22:15-20** <sup>15</sup> And he said to them, "I have earnestly **desired** to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. <sup>16</sup> For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." <sup>17</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. <sup>18</sup> For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." <sup>19</sup> And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." <sup>20</sup> And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

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