



THE BEREA PAGE

“Examining . . . to see if these things are so” ~ Acts 17.11

What’s Old Is New . . .

“Proposing that Jesus of Nazareth was raised from the dead was just as controversial nineteen hundred years ago as it is today. The discovery that dead people stay dead was not first made by the philosophers of the Enlightenment. The historian who wishes to make such a proposal is therefore compelled to challenge a basic and fundamental assumption—not only, as is sometimes suggested, the position of eighteenth-century scepticism, or of the ‘scientific worldview’ as opposed to a ‘pre-scientific worldview’, but also of almost all ancient and modern peoples outside the Jewish and Christian traditions.”
– N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Fortress Press, 2003), 10

Wisdom for Any Time

A friend visiting Łódź, Poland posted some pictures on Facebook from her visit to the largest Jewish cemetery in Europe. I was struck by a picture of a monument to members of the Szwarcbord and Charbord families, only two of whom survived the war. At the center of the plaque is a quotation from a poem by [Wisława Szymborska](#): “Those who knew / What this was about / Must make way for those / who know little.”

“Looking at the Word With Eyes Wide Open”

David Anguish

A preacher I know tells of receiving a note from a congregation member who commended him for “looking at the word with eyes wide open.” He meant it was apparent to him that the preacher was diligent in his efforts to base his conclusions only on what he discovered in his study of Scripture, not what he had always heard, learned in school or church classes, or was supposed to believe as part of a group or heritage.

Since it goes to the heart of what should be the primary concern of a teacher of God’s word (cf. Gal 2.5; 4.16), I can conceive of no greater compliment a preacher can receive for the task of preaching.

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As noted before (see [vol 2, no. 13](#)), we should believe the Bible, including its claims to reveal God’s mind and Christ’s teaching,¹ only because it is true. We can barely introduce the New Testament’s emphasis here. John says truth is embodied in Jesus, should be known, and is what frees and sanctifies. He also reports that the mission of the Spirit sent by the Son from the Father was to guide the disciples into all the truth (John 8.32; 14.6; 15.26; 16.13; 17.17, 19). Paul called the gospel the word of truth, declared he could not do anything against it, and said God wants everyone to know it (2 Cor 13.8; Eph 1.13; 1 Tim 2.4). He told the Thessalonians that some were “perishing” and would “be condemned” because they “did not believe” and “refused to love the truth” (2 Thess 2.10, 12). He assured the Corinthians that he and his co-workers had “renounced secret and shameful things” and were “not acting deceitfully or distorting the word of God,” but instead were “commending [themselves] before God . . . by an open display of the truth” (2 Cor 4.2 CSB). He told Timothy to “rightly handle the word of truth” and “preach the word,” even when

Authority—From Jesus' Mind To Ours

"How did Paul receive the divine wisdom? He answered that question in 1 Corinthians 2:9-13. (1) He said that he and the other apostles knew the things they had declared because 'God [had] revealed them through the Spirit' (v. 10). (2) Truths revealed by the Spirit could be trusted because they originated with the 'thoughts of God' (v. 11). (3) Paul and others had received this revelation in 'words . . . taught by the Spirit' (v. 13). (4) Therefore, when the apostles taught they were passing on teaching that had originated with God (vv. 12, 13).

"This process fits with the passages in Matthew and John. Paul was not presenting a teaching that originated with him or with the other apostles. Rather, he was speaking authoritatively because authority had been delegated to him (see Matthew 16:19; 18:18). He claimed to teach only what he had learned from God's Spirit, who guaranteed its accuracy (see John 14-16 [14:25-26; 16:12-15]). Paul expressed confidence about his message in 1 Thessalonians 2:13: 'For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.'" [See also Eph 3.3-5 where the revealed teaching and writings are explicitly connected. Citations above are from the NASB] - David Anguish, "From Jesus' Mind to Ours," *Truth for Today*, 25, 3 (Aug. 2004): 13; *The Question of Authority*, pp.1-40; archived <http://www.biblecourses.com/English/AllLessons.aspx>; series: Authority

it was not "convenient" (NET), because some would "turn away from listening to the truth" (2 Tim 2.15; 4.2-4).

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I remember the room and where I was sitting four decades ago on the day one of our teachers made a point of urging us to resolutely pursue truth. The memory remains so vivid because of what he said next: "Just remember, Jesus told the truth and they crucified him."

Jesus first gave a form of that warning (cf. Matt 5.10-12; 10.17-23, 34-36) and his disciples soon learned its reality firsthand. When rebuked by unbelievers and told to stop teaching about Jesus, they replied, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5.29). When a challenge to compromise came from within, from Jewish believers (Acts 15.1, 5) who insisted Gentile disciples must follow all Mosaic practices (*contra* Acts 15.28-29), Paul, unlike both Cephas and Barnabas in Antioch, refused to "yield . . . even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved" (Gal 2.5, 11-14).

The challenges the first disciples faced to their devotion to truth remind us that there are obstacles on the road that looks at the word with eyes wide open. These may include personal blind spots and subtle (or not so subtle!) pressure to conform to traditional conclusions. And we may find ourselves on lonely and uncomfortable paths we never expected to travel.²

In his 1974 Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn said, "One word of truth shall outweigh the world." Committed to "resist the evil empire from the inside, [he] had two options: to be stronger than the Soviets—a forlorn hope—or to undermine the empire of lies with the moral force of truth."³ He, and others like him, chose the latter.

If the commitment to pursue, love, and declare truth is vital for political and societal change, how much more so for the spiritual war in which we are engaged?

www.davidanguish.com

Notes

¹ For Scripture revealing God's mind, see Deut 4.1-2; 12.32; Hos 4.1-6; 1 Pet 4.11; Jas 1.21; 1 John 2.3-5; 5.1-3; 1 Thess 2.13; 2 Tim 2.15; etc. For a summary of the NT evidence that it conveys Christ's teaching, see the sidebar article on p. 2, "Authority—From Jesus' Mind to Ours."

² Recall the stories of Elijah, Micaiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others; see 1 Kings 17-19; 22; Isa 6.9-13; Jer 44.15-19; cf. Heb 11.36-38.

³ Os Guinness and Richard W. Ohman, "The Crisis of Truth," *Unriddling Our Times: Reflections on the Gathering Cultural Crisis*, ed. Os Guinness (Baker Books, 1999), 61.

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