



"You can ignore reality, but you cannot ignore the consequences of ignoring reality."

—Ayn Rand

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Truth and God's Governance (Part One)

George Orwell, author of *1984*, once noted, "During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act." While this can certainly be seen within politics—which was Orwell's target—we must remember that "universal deceit" has essentially been the human condition since the very beginning.

[Satan](#) is the father of lies ([John 8:44](#)), the great dragon "who deceives the whole world" ([Revelation 12:9](#)). Within this spiritual environment, speaking the truth is tantamount to rebelling against the powers that be, and it has not been unusual for the governments of this world to persecute or even kill those whose words—and lives—call them into account ([Matthew 5:10-12; 23:29-37](#)).

[Jesus Christ](#) was not a typical revolutionary, the kind who sought the overthrow of a human regime, yet the truth He spoke was so radical that He was put to death cruelly for it. What did He say and do that the Satan-inspired governments of men found so threatening? In short, what was the truth that caused such a stir?

When Jesus was on trial before Pontius Pilate, they had a conversation regarding truth that can help us understand why it troubled so many:

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into [the world](#), that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all." ([John 18:36-38](#))

Jesus tells Pilate that He had come into the world so that He could "bear witness to the truth." He continues, "Everyone who is *of* the truth hears [understands and obeys] My voice." He makes two profound statements regarding truth, yet Pilate's question dealt with whether He were a *king*. Pilate then makes a rhetorical response that shows that he—and most of the world—did not hear Christ's voice: "What is truth?"

Pilate is not merely asking about factual accuracy. Jesus had been brought before him so he could determine the facts of the case, and his acquittal of Him shows that Pilate believed he had heard all the facts. Instead, when Pilate rhetorically asks, "What is truth?" he is requesting more than just correct knowledge. We know this because the Greek word translated "truth" or "true" (*ale theia*) has a meaning closer to our word "reality."

This conversation about truth—reality—resulted from Pilate asking Jesus if He were a king. When we understand the essence of what Christ said, we see that *reality* and *kingship*—His Kingship—are inextricably linked. This is so because the highest plane of reality, or we might say the *most real* thing, is [God](#) and His governance, that is, His Kingdom. God's sovereignty and governance are reality. There is nothing more real.

Other things may also be real—such as Pilate's or Herod's authority or any number of other elements in life—but all of them are temporary and unreliable. They exist on a much lower level, and thus can be said to be less

real than God. God's sovereignty and control of His creation are realities that never change. They are permanent factors and also the largest factors we have to consider when making evaluations.

When Jesus says that He came into the world to bear witness to reality, it is just another way to express that He came to preach [the gospel](#) of the [Kingdom of God](#). That is reality. He bore witness to God's governance and the fact that a literal Kingdom would be established on the earth so God's governance could be clearly seen.

Then He essentially tells Pilate that everyone who is of reality—everyone who has his source in this reality of God's Kingdom—hears and obeys the voice of Jesus Christ, the Spokesman of that reality ([John 1:1](#)). If Pilate caught even a glimpse of what Jesus was saying, his mind must have been reeling. It is no wonder that all he could come back with is, "What is reality?"

Understanding that the primary truth—the foundational reality—is God's governance over His physical and spiritual creation gives us a new lens through which to see our lives. From this foundation, we will look into two principles gleaned from biblical examples and recognizing God's active management of all that is taking place. These two principles are actually two sides of the same coin of God's governance.

The first principle is that a humble person is one who submits to reality—and most specifically, the reality of God. A humble person willingly submits to God's governance, sovereignty, justice, and every other form of the outworking of His will.

John the Baptist serves as a sterling example of this principle. John's disciples were concerned because Jesus was gaining a larger following than John ([John 3:26](#)), but John explained reality to them by saying, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven" ([John 3:27](#)). John understood the reality of God's governance, and since God is the source of all authority, he humbly submitted to Him.

He said a little later, "He [Christ] must increase, but I must decrease" ([John 3:30](#)). He realized that he was not the main event but just the warm-up act, we might say. He actively submitted to the reality that God is sovereign and the

Source of all authority. John knew that he would have been in opposition to God if he had done anything other than humbly fulfill the role that God had given to him. He trusted that God would work everything else out. From this we can understand why Jesus says no one was greater than John the Baptist ([Matthew 11:11](#); [Luke 7:28](#))!

In Part Two, we will look at another outstanding example of humility, as well as the second principle of our place in God's governance.

- David C. Grabbe

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Truth \(Part 1\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Nothing is more important than the truth or the seeking after the truth. If we are going to be searching for truth, we should not be seeking it in the philosophies of men (a syncretic system of beliefs having its source in Babylon, a combination of human reason aided by demonic spirits and astrological prognostication - the weak and beggarly elements referred to by the apostle Paul in Galatians 4:9) but rather in the fullness of truth found in Christ with God's revelation as the final arbiter. There must be a continuous searching for more truth with the seeking of the kingdom of God as the highest priority to the end that we grow to full spiritual maturity.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Elijah's Dose of Reality](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Sometimes, we get down because we think that all our labors for God have gone unnoticed. Elijah did, and his story points out a major lesson we all would do well to heed today.

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