

Prayer List

Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia
Josh
Daniel
Olene

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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This Week's Question:

What engraver and embroiderer helped construct materials for the tabernacle?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Amaziah - Amos 7:10-17

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"If You Abide in My Word, You are My Disciples Indeed" John 8:31

By Shane Millard

For as long as man has existed there has been conflict between truth and error. The world was fundamentally changed by Satan's statement that "you will not surely die," and since then war broke out. Since that time man has changed very little, and this same conflict manifested itself in Jesus' discourse with the Pharisees in John eight. These religious leaders had ignored, warped, hedged, and perverted the truth of God's word, and Jesus came to shed light on their darkness.

The conflict in John eight begins in verses 13-20 with a defense of Jesus' witness. Under claims by the Pharisees that His witness was not true, Jesus said first that His witness was true because He knew where He was from and where He was going - unlike His audience. He also said that the Father bore witness of Him, and that confirms Jesus' testimony. This dual witness fulfilled the law's requirements for a true testimony (v 17). Then there was more conflict when Jesus showed that the Pharisees would not be able to follow Jesus because they would not believe in Him and turn from their sins. This truth Jesus received from the Father and tried to share with the Pharisees, but they would not have it.

Within this context, Jesus begins discussing three contrasts between those who love and receive the truth and those who reject and do not understand the truth. The first is in verses 31-36 when Jesus said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Now while Jesus is specifically speaking of spiritual freedom,

truth by its very nature removes bonds and enables people to be free. The contrast Jesus lays out is this: know the truth and be free, or remain in sin and be a slave. The reaction of the Jews was clear, they didn't believe they were slaves, and they were confused by what Jesus meant. Jesus then said that whoever commits sin is a slave of sin, and the only way to have slavery removed is by contact with the Son. This freedom from sin and service to righteousness is discussed by Paul in Romans six. Paul says that freedom from slavery comes when the Romans "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine in which you were delivered" - that being baptism in verse six. These passages show us the enslaving and destructive nature of sin, as well as the blessed freedom truth gives us.

The next contrast in John eight is the idea of offspring. If the Jews would know the truth and receive it they would be of their father Abraham. But Jesus points out that these Jews were not of the lineage of Abraham in a spiritual sense because they wanted to kill Jesus, who had told them the truth. The Jews' immediate reaction was to defend themselves and say they were not born of fornication. This showed they misunderstood what Jesus meant, and their lives said that they were not the children of God. In fact, these Jews had been estranged from God and were children of fornication. The old testament many times speaks of the Jews' relationship to God as a marriage, but throughout much of their history they lived in adultery. These adulterous actions against God bore fruit in the type of children Jesus interacted with in John eight. Despite what these Jews said, they were children of fornication - not of Abraham or God.

The final contrast is between being of God or of Satan. The passage turns to a discussion of whom the Jews really belonged to. Yes they were slaves, yes they were children of fornication, but more importantly they were of their father Satan. If they had been of God, Jesus says "you would love Me," but they were trying to destroy Jesus just like Satan who was a murderer from the beginning and could not stand in the truth. In fact, Satan has no truth in him and everything he says is a lie! Because Jesus spoke the truth these Jews wanted to kill Him. This shows the heart of these Jews and that they were not of God. If they were of God, they would have heard God's words through Jesus.

What application can be made from such a powerful text? First, what is our attitude toward the truth? Do we love the truth and cling

to it no matter the consequences? These Jews were unwilling to let go of their position and former beliefs in order to come to Jesus. The disciples of Jesus will never be this way, they will abide in Jesus' word and be freed by the truth.

Do we have a heart to receive the truth despite the source? Sometimes Christians can fall into the mindset that they have a monopoly on the truth and that those in the world have no truth. If we have this attitude we will not have the open minds and objective views that facilitate good, wholesome discussion. These Jews thought they had the truth, but they were wrong. As Christians we need to be examples of always seeking to know the truth and having book, chapter, and verse for all we do.

This text also shows the power of truth. Truth exposes evil and challenges misconceptions and the status quo. Truth calls for action and the adjustment of the thoughts and will. Lies leave men in the darkness and leave no room for change while consoling men in their evil status. Truth empowers and exposes, while lies weaken and cover.

The last application is the extent many will go to in order to have the truth silenced. There is a process individuals go through in their rejection of truth. They first reject the word, next they become annoyed or shamed by the revelation, and finally in an effort to protect themselves and silence the critic they resort to murder. Jesus speaks of this when He said that these people would resort to killing Him because His word had no place in them and because they were like Satan who "does not stand in the truth." This has been the history of all those who strive to share the truth: the world rejects them and ultimately calls for their death. It happened to the Christians in the first century, and it happened later in this text as well. Jesus continues His discussion and points out that he would not be a liar like them, that He knew Abraham, and that He was the "I AM" v 58. This caused the Jews' anger to boil over, and "they took up stones to throw at Him" v 59. Such is the fate of all men who expose the truth. It is just like Paul said in Galatians 4:16, "Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell the truth?" It is sad that many have become enemies because of their stand for truth, but Jesus' disciples will be known by their attitude toward truth. May we always be free, be of the seed of Abraham, and be loyal to our Heavenly Father!