

LOSS OF TRUTH

Truth – the way things really are

- John 14:6 – “I am the Truth”
- John 1:14 & 17 – grace AND truth
- John 17:17 – Sanctify in the truth
- Ephesians 6:14 – “gird your loins with truth”

Why start with Truth?

If there is Truth, then my search for it will lead to an accurate understanding of reality and my reasoning will have grounds on which to validate various other truth claims.

LOSS OF TRUTH

1. Platonic Dualism – two “realms” of truth.

- This is what Francis Schaeffer calls a “two-story” view of reality:

Upper Story

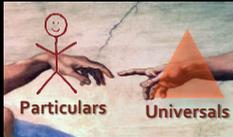
Lower Story

- Plato: **Form** over **Matter**
- Aquinas: **Grace** over **Nature**
- Enlightenment: **Romanticism** (religion and the humanities) over **Enlightenment** (science and reason)
- Descartes: **Mind** (spirit, thought, emotion, will) over **Matter** (a mechanical, deterministic machine)

LOSS OF TRUTH

Truth – why start here?

Renaissance (14th–17th) – *humanism reigns*
 • “the genius of man ... the unique and extraordinary ability of the human mind”
 • Appraise ideas through a combination of reasoning and empirical evidence.



Reformation (1517–1648) – *Sola Scriptura*
 • Inspiration
 • Divine Authority
 • Clarity
 • Efficacy
 • Sufficiency – The Bible contains everything to obtain salvation.



LOSS OF TRUTH

Current view of truth:

Upper Story: Values, Private Sphere
 (Personal Preferences, Nonrational, Noncognitive, Religion)

Lower Story: Facts, Public Sphere
 (Scientific Knowledge, Rational, Verifiable, Science)

“Human reason was regarded as perfectly competent on its own for understanding the state, society, economics, philosophy—in fact, everything outside of theology. Thus the Christian mind itself began to be split. God’s Word was limited to the upper story, but was deemed irrelevant and unnecessary in directing the lower story.” (Pearcey)

A man of divided allegiance is unstable (James 1:8)

THE TRUTH IS FOUND IN JESUS

2. Truth – what has happened to it?

- “Truth is so obscured nowadays and lies [are] so well established that unless we love the truth we shall never recognize it.” Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)
- *Seven Men Who Rule the World From the Grave* (David Breese, Moody Press, 1990):
 1. Charles Darwin – man and societies evolve; **everything changes**
 2. Carl Marx – working class with help from big government can overthrow their oppressors
 3. Julius Wellhausen – **higher criticism and religious liberalism**
 4. Sigmund Freud – **truth is found by looking within man**
 5. John Dewey – **man needs to be educated, not regenerated**
 6. John Maynard Keynes – **the government is God**
 7. Soren Kierkegaard – **confusion is everywhere; truth is subjective**

LOSS OF TRUTH

2. Truth – what has happened to it?

- Historically: The Bible was held to be God’s revelation of His will for mankind: **revelation over reason**
- Human reason was admitted to be fallible, the Bible was held to be infallible (or inerrant).
- Julius Wellhausen – Uncompromisingly secular approach to the Bible.
 - *Documentary hypothesis* – the Torah had its origins in a redaction of four originally independent texts dating from several centuries after the time of Moses.
 - Yehezkel Kaufmann – *Toledot HaEmunah HaYisraelit (The Religion of Israel)*
- Religious liberalism – **reason over revelation**.
- Man’s reasoning ability was sufficient to answer the philosophical questions of life without help from revelation

LOSS OF TRUTH

3. Liberal (Natural) Theology

- Based on reason and ordinary experience (*a posteriori*), not scripture and religious experience (*a priori*)
 1. Arose as a result of the rationalism and experimentalism of the philosophers and scientists.
 2. It basically states that whatever does not agree with reason and science is to be questioned or rejected. (*reason over revelation*)
 - Most students leaving universities today are skeptics – question everything, believe nothing.
 3. As a result, liberal theology has rejected the historicity and scientific claims of the Special Revelation (the Word).
 - “The Bible isn’t a history book or a scientific textbook”
- The orthodox view of scripture is that it is a Special revelation of the way things really are (*revelation over reason*)
- It is *Total Truth*

THE WORD OF GOD

Why Liberal Theology as a background?

- The Bible claims to be God’s inspired revelation of *Total Truth* to man.
- Therefore if it is *Total Truth*, it must be accurate (true) when it touches on historic events and scientific insights.
- More importantly, if it is not verifiable through external sources (history and science) then the truth claims concerning salvation *are not verifiable*.

Orthodox Perspective on Scripture:

Liberal view on Scripture:

Soteriology (or Theology) was verifiable by
Biblical History and Scientific Revelation

Soteriology (or Theology)
Secular History and Naturalistic Science

- The fatal flaw in *Liberal Theology* is that it accepts as true the bifurcation of truth: It accepts a naturalistic account of science and history (lower story) while trying to find meaning and value in theology (upper story)
- It views the scriptures from a “salvation first” perspective.