

- Ephesians 4:25—“Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.” Paul clearly juxtaposes lying with the truth. Truth equals telling it like it is. Anything less is a lie and therefore devoid of the truth.

As we saw in the first pamphlet in this series titled *What is Truth? An Introductory Study*, Jesus asserts in John 17:17, “Sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth.” In order for Jesus’s statement to be true and not false, the word of God must be true or Jesus violated the principle of correspondence. Therefore, we concluded that the Scriptures are true and accurately represent mankind’s spiritual state as well as God’s historical, present, and future dealings with mankind. Furthermore, this reality also makes right division of the word of truth paramount. If one fails to recognize the distinctions God has placed within his word one is faced with having to reconcile contradictory statements that seem to undermine the Bible’s claim to be the only source of objective truth about God. As we have already seen a thing cannot be true and not true in the same sense at the same time. Mid-Acts dispensationalists need to press this point home when dealing with our non-Pauline brethren because it is them, not us who make the word of God of no effect through failing to approach God’s word in God’s way.

The correspondence view of truth is the only adequate view of truth and is supported by philosophy and the testimony of both the living and written word.

Endnotes

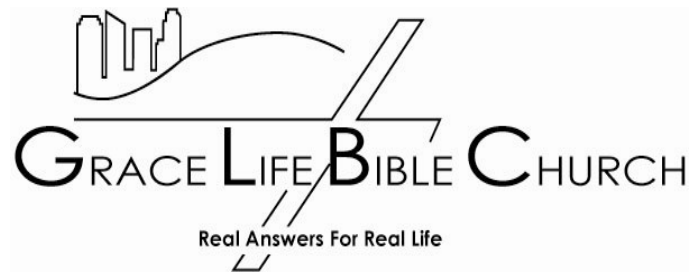
- 1) Norman L. Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 742.
- 2) Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology Volume One* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2002), 114.
- 3) Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 742.

- 4) Geisler. *Systematic Theology Volume One*, 114.
- 5) *Ibid.*, 114.
- 6) Norman L. Geisler, and Ron Brooks. *When Skeptics Ask: A Handbook of Christian Evidences*. (Grand Rapids, MI; Baker Books, 1990), 263.
- 7) Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 742.
- 8) Geisler. *Systematic Theology Volume One*, 114.
- 9) Geisler. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 742.
- 10) Exodus 20:16
- 11) Genesis 2:17
- 12) Deuteronomy 13:1-4
- 13) Geisler. *Systematic Theology Volume One*, 114.

For more information on the study of Apologetics from a Mid-Acts perspective be sure to check out Bryan’s blog **Defense and Confirmation** at:

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What is Truth? A Defense of the Correspondence View of Truth



“Great, and I’ll also need some mirrors.”

BY
BRYAN C. ROSS

Discover the Philosophical and Biblical justification for the correspondence view of truth.

What is Truth? A Defense of the Correspondence View of Truth

In the previous posting we surveyed two of the most prevalent inadequate views of truth, Pragmatism and Skepticism. Rather than focusing on what truth is not, we shall now turn our attention to articulating an adequate view of truth. Simply stated, “truth is telling it like it is.” In other words, truth is that which corresponds to its referent, and therefore, truth is that which represents the way things really are. It does not matter if one is discussing abstract or actual realities, or mathematical, or theoretical ideas, truth is that which accurately expresses its referent.(1) In short, truth is that which correctly depicts that state of affairs whatever they may be. (2)

In contrast, falsehood is that which does not correspond to its object and therefore misrepresents the way things actually are. One’s intentions or beliefs are inconsequential; if a statement lacks proper correspondence, it is false.(3) Therefore, error does not tell it like it is, but like it is not. It is a misrepresentation of the way things are.(4) A host of philosophical and theological arguments exist to substantiate the necessity of the correspondence view of truth.

Philosophical Arguments for a Correspondence View of Truth

There are many philosophical reasons to accept the veracity of the correspondence view of truth.

First, *noncorrespondence views of truth are self-defeating*. One cannot deny the correspondence view without utilizing it in the attempted denial. For example, the statement, “the noncorrespondence view is true” implies that the noncorrespondence view reflects reality. As a result, noncorrespondence is self-defeating because the view cannot be articulated without utilizing the very

correspondence view that it alleges to be false.(5)

Second, *noncorrespondence views of truth make lying impossible*. “If our words do not need to correspond to the facts, then they can never be factually incorrect. Without a correspondence view of truth, there can be no true or false.”(6) This would create the absurd situation where any statement is compatible with any given state of affairs.(7)

Third, *noncorrespondence views of truth lead to the breakdown of factual conversation*. “Factual communication depends on informative statements, but informative statements must be factually true (that is, they must correspond to the facts) in order to inform one correctly.”(8) If facts are not to be used in evaluating a statement, then one hasn’t really said anything. Even literary devices such as metaphors have no real meaning unless one understands that there is a literal meaning with which the figurative is comparable. One who seeks to deny the correspondence view does so at own’s peril.(9) Consider the following example: if one was seeking to board a plane and was informed that the plane had no wings, how long should one wait to see if the statement was in fact true? In the final analysis all communication depends on the correspondence view of truth.

Biblical Arguments for a Correspondence View of Truth

Theologically, it is paramount for Bible students to recognize the Bible’s use of the correspondence view of truth when delivering God’s message to humanity.

Consider the ninth commandment, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”(10) The veracity of this statement rests upon the correspondence view of truth. According to this verse, “false witness,” equals spreading information about one’s neighbor that is not correct and thereby does not correspond with the actual state of affairs. Consequently, the Scriptures support the philosophical claim that any denial of the correspondence view makes lying impossible.

John 8:44 identifies Satan a liar and the father of lies. In Genesis 3:4, Satan misrepresents the state of affairs by

telling Eve, “Ye shall not surely die,” when God actually said certain death would follow from breaking the prohibition against eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.(11) In like manner, Ananias and Sapphira received swift destruction for misrepresenting the facts regarding their financial situation in Acts 5:1-4. The testimony of Scripture is clear; lying is not possible without recognizing the correspondence view of truth.

The Bible also offers numerous other examples of the correspondence view of truth:

- Genesis 42:16—“Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies.” By sending one of his brothers home Joseph is testing the veracity of their claim. In other words, Joseph is testing the witness of his brothers to see if corresponds with the way things really are.
- Deuteronomy 18:22—“When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him..” According to Moses a prophet’s authenticity should be judged by whether or not his predictions come true. A message is to be considered false and therefore not from God if events did not proceed as they were predicted or the prophet contradicted or undermined a portion of the Law.(12)
- Psalm 119:163—“I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love.” Truth and falsehood was judged based on whether or not it corresponded with God’s law.
- Proverbs 14:25—“A true witness delivereth souls: but a deceitful witness speaketh lies.” This verse teaches that what is factually correct is the truth. “In court, intentions alone will not save innocent lives when they have been accused. Only the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth will do it.”(13)