



Seek and You Shall Find

Once, America valiantly strove for biblical standards. Early American colonists risked the perils of new land in search of freedom and truth. Many of our forefathers laid down their lives for beliefs that they conceived important. They abandoned their European homes, hoping that a new land would provide liberty to walk in their faith. Our ancestors thirsted to know their Creator, to do what was right in his sight, and they were willing to uproot their lives for the sake of righteousness and truth.

Today, you and I have the religious freedom to pursue what they could only have dreamed. We have the freedom to believe as we choose, and there is presently little threat for expressing our beliefs. We do not need to hide our faith in the closet. Rather, we can freely promote our particular denomination. With the birth of the Internet and many recent archaeological discoveries, our generation possesses the tools and information for which our church fathers had longed. Yet, most of us are content that *our church has the truth*. We know logically that not every religion can be the “true” religion, but we are sure that our particular sect has it, or even more complacently, that truth is an elusive element that does not even exist.

Religious doctrine has become a matter that is in the eyes of the beholder. We each hold differing interpretations and beliefs, which is considered acceptable in our postmodern paradigm. Modern emergence of the doctrine of universal tolerance has obscured the lines between right and wrong. Religion has accepted the proposition that God has no absolute values and no absolute truth. Proposing that God may *not* tolerate certain interpretations, beliefs, or values has become politically incorrect and almost libelous. Dr. James Dobson, conservative author and founder of *Focus on the Family*, observes:

This system of thought, also called moral relativism, teaches that truth is not only unknowable from God, whom postmodernism perceives as a myth, or from man, who has no right to speak for the rest of us. Rather, truth doesn't exist at all.

Nothing is right or wrong, *nothing* is good or evil, *nothing* is positive or negative. Everything is relative. All that matters is “what’s right for me and what’s right for you.” Those ideas evolve from person to person as they go along.¹

We have become complacent with the quest for knowledge in our churches, and many of us assume that finding an “absolute” interpretation of God’s word is impossible.

Many earnest believers have pondered the various theologians who lived before our time. Every Protestant pioneer saw something slightly different in Scripture when they established the churches that our families have been brought up in today. If each of these pious theologians understood Scripture to support a slightly different doctrine, why should we be any different? We think that, if man has not found the truth by now, then truth is probably best left only to God to know or is a Pandora’s Box better left unopened. Many believe that, if humanity has not found truth by now, he probably won’t.

In many ways our churches have become quite polytheistic. Each church holds a particular view of who “God” is. Every church holds a different idea (doctrine) of what God teaches man to do or not to do. In essence, our churches have created many gods, all of whom we call the “one true God.” We have become complacent in our quest for righteousness, as the church is often relegated to a social club status. Since we assume that truth is never attainable, doctrine becomes a matter of personal faith, while conflicting facts are all too often dismissed.

This modern complacency is far removed from Scripture’s concepts of truth. The psalmist David prophesied, “For he comes, for he comes to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people *with his truth*” (Ps 96:13). The prophet Isaiah also encouraged his nation to seek the Creator in truth. “I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: *I said not to the seed of Jacob, Seek you me in vain: I Yahweh the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right*” (Isa 45:19). Jesus upheld this teaching by instructing, “Seek and you shall find, knock and the door shall be opened to you” (Matt 7:7–12; Luke 11:9–13).²

Jesus urged his followers to seek to know their God. He promised that if we follow this command we will find the one true God. Could it be that our many religious denominations exist today because our churches have allowed external influences to shape their idea of who God is? Could it be that if we look *only* to “the word of God” for truth we will find a path leading to one set of nonconflicting doctrines?

Scripture encourages people to question their ideas of God. The Creator desires that we prove him and his word rather than blindly tagging along.³ The prophet Isaiah summoned ancient Israel to examine his word to see if it was righteous or not (Isa 1:18). The Apostle Paul indicates that by proving what is good and acceptable in the Creator’s sight we change our preconceived ideas while renewing our minds (Rom 12:2). More importantly, Paul exhorts that we should examine ourselves and prove our beliefs (faiths) to see whether they stand on the word of God or not.⁴

Modern science, building on our ancestors’ successes and failures, has discovered many truths about how the universe works. Academia has made great strides forward in astronomy, mathematics, chemistry, cosmology, technology, and medicine. Archaeology has

equally excelled, as once-buried cities have been resurrected to divulge the background of biblical accounts. Scholars' studies have progressed substantially, enabling us to reconstruct ancient societies: their houses, temples, beliefs, and ways of life.

Over the past century, the field of comparative studies has equally excelled. Our understanding of the context of biblical accounts has enabled us to understand not merely the ancient's physical living conditions but the actual social context. The one endeavor, however, that I have yet to see scholars attempt is a thorough conceptual interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures (i.e., Old Testament).

This quest is not without risk, which is probably why it has been avoided. Recent historians who have ventured down this path now view the Old Testament as a subjective work that was created during the reign of King Josiah, reducing most of its accounts to folktales written for political propaganda.⁵ If this is *not* the case, there should be ample evidence demonstrating Scripture's historical validity to answer many of the disquieting questions posed by recent scholars.

History demonstrates that the scientific method works. Our lives have been blessed because Galileo Galilei, Sir Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, and others followed this principle. Nevertheless, academics readily claim that religion is simply a matter of faith that can never be proven. Personal beliefs can never be validated or discredited. Yet which scientist has ever set out to prove this hypothetical claim right or wrong? If the scientific approach that scholars have applied to other fields of study were applied to Scripture, should not we expect to find that truth is attainable through a systematic collection and comparison of what God's word actually states?

If God is real, and he commands us to seek him, it stands to reason that he desires us to follow his brand of truth rather than our own.⁶ If we were to search the Scriptures, could we find one true doctrine that preceeds modern religious interpretations? If we seek God, should not we be able to find him? If we find him, can we discover his truth rather than our version of it?