

Absolute Truth

Many will say to me in that day, 'Adonai, Adonai,' did we not eat and drink in your name and have we not prophesied in your name? And in your name have cast out shadim? And in your name done many powerful works? And then will I profess to them, that I know them not. Depart from me, all you workers of Torah-less-ness. (Mat. 7:22-23, last part quoted from Ps. 6:8 and 119:115; Hebraic Roots Version NT translated from Aramaic)

Okay, if you subscribe to the Barna Research Updates you knew this was coming. Most of you know me well enough that when you saw the recent update (Americans Are Most Likely to Base Truth On Feelings), you had to be thinking, "Oh boy, I bet Bruce isn't gonna leave this one alone." For those who haven't seen it, it's on their website (www.barna.org).

Well, I hate to disappoint all my friends, or even my non-friends (I hesitate to use the term enemies). Except this might be a little bit of a surprise, because I'm going to ask for something from some of you. To those who have been offended before by my comments in their email (or in person), please grant me forgiveness. I am at fault for including you in an attempted discussion, and I should have known better. Here I was handing out my viewpoint, and I wasn't even aware that some of us are speaking different languages.

When I write or speak, I am always trying to grope my way towards the truth because I know I haven't completely grasped it all yet. But I do believe there is an absolute truth to grope for ("thy Word is Truth"). By absolute I mean final, authoritative, and complete; and implied in the concept is the power and authority to back it up. Or, according to George Barna of Barna Research, "truth that doesn't change according to circumstances." You see, I believe the entire Bible is the inspired, complete, inerrant WORD FROM GOD; "absolute truth" as it were. And God Himself is the power and authority behind it. I admit I don't have the final word on what all of it means, much less how it applies. But by taking the plain meaning and comparing it to our practice, I had hoped to create dialogue that will take us to a better understanding together.

However, according to the recent data from Barna (www.barna.org), boy was I stupid. I have been really, really wrong with some of you, perhaps most of you, and I can't apologize enough. According to the survey, Barna found that most people, "born again" or not, do not believe in absolute truth (about 3 out of 4, or 78% of the population). I would have thought that the "Church" had a higher percentage of people seeking truth gathered under one roof, but apparently that is not true.

According to the survey only about three in ten people who claim "born-again status" believe in absolute truth. As a matter of fact the "born again-ers" hardly differ at all from

the non-born again (there's another article in that statement somewhere). The majority of people right now, this instant, are convinced that "truth is relative," and they make their decisions based on what "feels right" or "would produce the most personally beneficial results."

So all this time I have been mistaken, because I assumed that I was talking to a group of people who pretty much wanted to understand and apply absolute truth. I made this mistake once before, a couple of years ago, when I was teaching publicly. I had thought that the people I was speaking too were like "the Bereans" (Acts 17:10-12), and I made some statements intended to promote discussion. But I was wrong, because out of every ten people I talked with then, or write to now, only about two believe in absolute moral truth. It's almost like I was (or am) speaking in tongues.

Now, I'm not saying that disagreement with me is the same as rejecting absolute truth. But if we're going to disagree, we should at least base it in the truth rather than opinions. Though come on guys, let's face it, let's be real, those of you who have disagreed with me, who have silently listened to or read what I was trying to say and refused to respond, or responded second hand through other people, we haven't really disagreed on the Word, have we? We've just been arguing from two different belief structures. The thing is, we should be trying to understand the Word Of God, and not arguing over feelings, opinions, or what will "produce the most personally beneficial result" as some people do.

In the survey, Mr. Barna goes on to say, "Christian families, educators and churches must prioritize this matter if the Christian community hopes to have any distinctiveness in our culture. The virtual disappearance of this cornerstone of the Christian faith – that is, God has communicated a series of moral principles in the Bible that are meant to be the basis of our thoughts and actions, regardless of our preferences, feelings or situations – is probably the best indicator of the waning strength of the Christian Church in America today."

And more of what we already have is not the answer, either. George says, "Continuing to preach more sermons, teach more Sunday school classes and enroll more people in Bible study groups won't solve the problem since most of these people don't accept the basis of the principles being taught in those venues. The failure to address this issue at its root, and to do so quickly and persuasively, will undermine the strength of the church for at least another generation, and probably longer."

There you have it, an independent, objective source telling us the results of decades of retreat from teaching (and practicing) the basic principles in the Word. I think it's obvious that we have been so good at finding excuses to avoid obedience we have crippled ourselves with success. Whatever you want to call the doctrine currently being taught in the so-called "Church," ITS NOT WORKING. It is taking us further away from the Father instead of bringing us closer. Look at the fruit of the doctrines!

I have watched TV programs such as “Friends” several times; maybe you’ve watched them also. I usually can’t stand them for very long because they are so inane, but I have seen a few episodes. It amazes me to see stupid people doing stupid things over and over again, and they just don’t get it that the truth is right in front of them. For instance, none of the characters is ever able to find a good romantic relationship. Every week they find a new partner, only to have the relationship come apart in the next few episodes. And sometimes they don’t even wait till the next episode.

Again and again, through an (apparently) endless parade of “significant others” they keep making the same mistakes week after week. They don’t see that the reason these relationships never work out is because they keep disobeying God’s law and **having sex outside of marriage**. Sometimes I just wanted to scream it out hoping they would hear me. It’s an accepted fact that they are supposed to jump in the sack with anybody they meet, even though this NEVER works to keep a relationship together and is usually the reason why it falls apart in the first place. The relationships keep blowing up over and over, and they just can’t find satisfaction or a life-mate. Duh!

The girl characters are especially stupid in this fashion. I don’t know, I guess I just expect more smarts from them in this area than the guys since they have more to lose. Of course, the writers have a lot to do with it but you’ve got to admit they are mirroring real life at least a little. The characters meet a guy, jump in the sack a few times, and then wonder why he dumped them. Man, you would think that after two or three times they would figure it out. “Gee, what do you think, maybe I shouldn’t give it up until after I get a commitment from this lug,” huh? My Dad used to say, “If they’re getting the milk for free, why buy the cow?” But the girls keep giving it away for free, and keep wondering why the guys won’t “buy” the commitment cow. With this kind of smarts it’s no wonder we have Presidents who redefine the word “sex” and get away with it.

Unfortunately, the Church is doing the same things, only it’s worse with us because we already have a husband. We depart from obedience to His basic scriptural principles, give away the farm, don’t even bother to get commitment first (we’re not even selling it for anything worthwhile), then the next thing you know the relationship is blowing up. Not only the relationship between our husband and us is wrecked, but also whatever else we thought to gain from the exchange blows up. You would think that after two or three times we would figure it out, but we don’t even have the grace to blush. We go on “sniffing the wind” (Jer. 2:23-25) like a wild camel in her month (or like a character on a sitcom), departing from the boundaries given by God in His Love for our benefit, and wandering the wild pastures looking for the next bed-mate.

*“How can you say, ‘I am not defiled, I have not pursued the ba’alim’?
Look at your conduct in the valley, understand what you have done.*

You are a restive young female camel, running here and there, wild, accustomed to the desert, sniffing the wind in her lust - who can control her when she's in heat? Males seeking her need not weary themselves, for at mating season they will find her. Stop before your shoes wear out, and your throat is dry from thirst! But you say, 'No, it's hopeless! I love these strangers, and I'm going after them.' ” (Jer. 2:23-25 CJB)

The only solution is to return to the pastures within His boundaries. Restore His Instructions (Torah) to their rightful place in our faith and practice. Simple obedience is what God requires of us, and He has given us all the strength and power to obey through our Husband the Messiah Yahshua.

Come, let's bow down and worship; let's kneel before Adonai who made us. For He is our God, and we are the people in his pasture, the sheep in His care. If only today, if you would listen to his voice: “Don't harden your hearts, as you did at M'rivah, as you did on that day at Massah in the desert, when your fathers put me to the test; they challenged me, even though they saw my work.” (Ps. 95:6-9 CJB)

Yeshua answered and said to them, “I told you, and you did not believe. And the works that I do in the name of my father bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not of my sheep as I said to you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give them eternal life, and they will not perish forever, and no man will pluck them from my hands. For my father, who gave to me from all is great, and no man is able to pluck them from the hand of my father. I and my father are one.” (Jn. 10:25-30 HRV)

“I will have them feed in good pastures; their grazing ground will be on the high mountains of Israel. They will rest in good grazing ground and feed in rich pastures on Israel's mountains. Yes, I will pasture my sheep; and I will let them rest,” says Adonai Elohim. “I will seek the lost, bring back the outcasts, bandage the broken, and strengthen the sick; but the fat and the strong I will destroy - I will feed them with judgment.” “As for you, my flock, Adonai Elohim says this: ‘I will judge between sheep and other sheep, between rams and billy-goats. (Eze. 34:14-17 CJB)

So I really do apologize to those of you who speak a different language than I do. Please forgive me, and feel free to send me a request to be removed from the list for future transmissions.

In loving hope of a return to better pastures
Bruce Bertram

And they could not return him a word; neither did any man wish again to question him further from that day. (Mat. 22:46 HRV)

And they were not able to catch a word from him before the people, and they marveled at his answer, and were silent. (Luke 20:26 HRV)