

## What is Truth?

The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche said that the most profound thing in the New Testament was Pilate's question, "*What is truth?*" (John 18:38). Nietzsche may have read the New Testament. But he neither knew or believed its truth.

People today are very sceptical. Many ask Pilate's question: What is truth? They doubt and deny that we can know the truth. This doubt is a sort of desperate faith, a conviction that they cannot be convinced of truth. People want to justify their ignorance, their unbelief, their errors, and themselves by the hopeless hope that there is no truth, or at least no knowing the truth.

What good is a question by itself? "*What is truth?*" is asking, not answering. These are not even the best words we have from Pilate. Much better are the one statement we know he wrote and his firm defence of that statement.

Pilate wrote the truth when he had affixed above the dying Saviour's head a placard proclaiming: "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS" (John 19:19). Pilate may not have meant it correctly. But that statement is true. In fact, it is Gospel truth.

"Jesus" means "Saviour" (Matthew 1:21). In fulfillment of prophecy, He was rejected by men and despised as a Nazarene (Matthew 2:23; John 1:46). He is David's Son as well as God's Son, the rightful King of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 1:1; John 1:49). He is the King who sacrificed Himself for His people. He will reign forever over the true Jews, all people who believe in Him and the forgiveness, life, and salvation He won for us by His suffering and dying for our sins in our place (Romans 2:28-29; Philippians 3:3).

The Jewish leaders objected to the words Pilate had written. Perhaps Pilate was tired of being pushed around. He insisted, "*What I have written I have written*" (John 19:22). Even a human ruler must at times insist on sticking with his words. We do not respect any man who does not stand by his word. How much more should we expect God, who cannot err and never changes, to stick with His Word?!

Putting it in writing makes it even more binding. A man is more careful about what comes from his pen than about what comes from his mouth. Spoken words can be lost in the air. Written words stay put. That is the purpose of writing them down. Pilate was weak and pliable. But even he stood by what he had written. God is strong and immovable. There is no doubt that He will stand by what He has written.

What God has written, God has written. God stands by His written Word. Jesus said, "*The Scripture cannot be broken*" (John 10:35). What God has written stands forever true. His Word will never pass away (Matthew 24:35).

God's Word is Law and Gospel. The Law tells us about our sins and God's anger. But the Gospel tells us about our Saviour and God's grace, the forgiveness of our sins because of Christ's suffering and death in our place. The main message of God's Book is the Gospel, the good news. God arranged to have even Pilate write it and post it. Jesus died for all our sins.

What is truth? It is written!