

Coptic church was founded in Egypt by John Mark, the author of the Gospel of Mark, sometime between A.D. 42 to A.D. 62.

### Summary

A trip to the Middle East, especially Israel, is a unique experience that every Christian should try to experience at least once in their life. It truly brings the Bible alive as you walk where Jesus and other saints of the Bible walked. The trip reaffirmed my current knowledge and walk in the Bible with the Old and New Testament especially the Garden of Gethsemane, Sea of Galilee and Mount of Beatitudes, and makes me want to delve even deeper into Scripture. It highlighted differences in beliefs of various religions. It reaffirmed my duty to read and study the Bible so I can draw closer to Jesus and be able to better interact with people of other religions.

### Reference

*Friends of Jerusalem International YMCA. [www.friendsofjy.org](http://www.friendsofjy.org)*



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# The Perversion of God's Truth: A Precursor to Chaos

By Daniel Brown

*"Truth is incontrovertible. Panic may resent it. Ignorance may deride it. Malice may distort it. But there it is." Winston Churchill*

### The Meaning of Truth

Those who testify in court are required to take an oath and swear that they are about to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Truth is the cornerstone of western jurisprudence, dating back to the Ten Commandments. God explicitly cautioned mankind against bearing false witness. Court officials assume that everyone has the same understanding of what it means to tell the truth, but everyday experiences indicate otherwise.

John 18:33-38 (NIV) describes the interrogation of Jesus by Pontius Pilate, during which Pilate asks Jesus if he claims to be King of the Jews. Jesus replies, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." Pilate then posed the ultimate follow-up question, "What is truth?" Unfortunately, John does not tell us how (or if) Jesus responded. Instead, we are told that Pilate just left the room. It is hard to imagine that Pilate intended such a profound question to be rhetorical and did not even wait for Jesus to answer, but that's the Gospel according to John.

Even though we don't know exactly how Jesus would have answered Pilate's question, John's Gospel quotes Jesus no less than 25 times proclaiming that what He is saying is the truth. At the very least, we can assume that the followers of Jesus appreciated the importance of telling the truth and understood what Jesus meant when He used the word. A dictionary definition of the term suggests that truth is that which accurately represents fact or reality. Simple enough. It wasn't that long ago that most of us had a reasonably good grasp of that concept, but events that have been unfolding in recent years have left many people bewildered and troubled about what has happened to truth. Indeed, we are plagued by an obfuscation of reality, along with the chaos that inevitably follows, in ways that one could hardly have imagined just a few years ago.

### The Perversion of Truth: Gender

It used to be that gender was a product of one's genetic makeup, a fixed hereditary trait, as determined by the presence of X or Y chromosomes. No more. Lines of distinction between the characteristics of males and females are blurred, and to some extent, undefined. Forget about genetic determination. Men become women and women become men in the blink of an eye, based on sheer impulse. Boys and girls are interchangeable. Gender is now "fluid" and considered to be whatever one chooses it to be. The options are endless, and the decision can be made or revised at any age. Medical intervention can add or subtract sex organs or alter secondary sex characteristics at will. Basic terminology is being co-opted by the day, as pronouns are revised and new terms, such as "birthing person," are foisted upon an unsuspecting public. Those who have not yet capitulated to the madness yearn for the day when standard pronouns will be rescued from nonbinary captors and restored to their proper grammatical application—when innocent bystanders will no longer be pressured into playing along with a preposterous charade of custom, self-selected pronouns.

This new gender revolution is mind boggling and deceptive, not only in terms of the questionable rationale behind it and the disruptive change that it has

wrought, but also in the rate at which long-established gender norms are being dismantled. Absurdity is becoming commonplace. It is no wonder that the corruption of gender is proving to be so deleterious to society because gender is a product of God's creation. The Bible explicitly states that there are two genders. That fact can be scientifically validated to the satisfaction of anyone with an objective viewpoint on the subject. The unfortunate result of removing God from the truth equation and leaving reality open to interpretation, is that it causes common sense to give way to lunacy, which ultimately leads to catastrophe. That is an apt description of the current state of affairs regarding gender and its newfound fluidity. Those who embrace this revolution have a right to live their lives as they see fit, in keeping with their own beliefs and opinions. However, those who sense that reality and truth have been taken hostage have a right to question the sweeping societal changes that are being imposed on everyone, whether they like it or not.

Is it in the interest of truth to allow genetically male students, who claim to be female but exhibit male genitalia, to share restrooms and shower facilities with females? Is it in the interest of truth (and fairness) to allow genetically male athletes, possessing physical attributes that confer obvious athletic advantages over females, to compete in women's sports? Should a twisted perception of inclusion be used as justification to turn women's athletic competition into a bizarre spectacle of gender denial, while threatening the meaningful advancements achieved for women under Title IX? Is it in the interest of truth that licensed health professionals, who took an oath to do no harm, are removing the breasts of troubled young women and chemically blocking the puberty of impressionable teens, who couldn't possibly comprehend the full ramifications of such extreme, unwarranted medical intervention? Natural boundaries that served society well for centuries have been obliterated in a just a few years. Is it rational to assume that the entire world maintained an erroneous understanding of binary genders throughout all of recorded history, and only now, at the dawn of the 21st century, society has finally come to the epiphany that biology is irrelevant and gender consists of a boundless array of personal options? Rational people need to contemplate the implications of where these alarming trends are likely to lead, especially in relation to the damaging effects on children.

### **The Perversion of Truth: Reproduction**

The personal choice phenomenon extends beyond gender. It is also at the forefront of vigorous debate regarding whether a pregnant woman has complete dominion over her fetus—to be able to choose whether it lives or dies. It used to be that pregnancy was cherished as a blessing, a gift from God, that enriches families and ensures the continuation of human civilization. There was universal consensus that maintaining the viability of a fetus throughout pregnancy is a responsibility of the highest order. After all, a fetus is a human being. Every person alive

today started out as a fetus and each of our lives depended on successfully surviving a gestational period. It is part of the natural order. Pregnancy is essentially a rite of passage that includes a period of development within the womb, during which the fetus receives vital sustenance from its mother until it is born, when it is sufficiently developed to venture out on its own. Women have been assigned that role and are specifically equipped to perform that function. Of course, the natural order can be subverted if a mother chooses to have the fetus aborted. Abortion is the intentional, premature termination of a human life. It robs human beings of the full spectrum of life experiences that awaits them after birth. Is it in the interest of truth that a woman's reproductive health preferences supersede the right of a fetus to go on living? A few relevant facts might shed some light on the subject.

Human reproduction is a construct of God's design, based on the sanctity of life and vital distinctions between male and female functions. The new gender fluidity movement has not changed the fact that an egg is still an egg and a sperm is still a sperm. Eggs still come from females and sperm still come from males. Perpetuation of the species depends on the creation of new life that results when, and only when, a sperm fertilizes an egg within the reproductive system of a female, just as God intended.

Every human, regardless of age or stage of fetal development, is a unique being unto itself, whose personal characteristics are determined at the time of conception, when genetic material from the father mixes with genetic material from the mother to yield the genetic material of their new creation. This process ensures that we are all unique, one-of-a-kind creatures, while also conforming to the basic design of our species and expressing traits similar to both parents. Since the middle of the last century, it has been known that hereditary processes are controlled by a 4-letter chemical alphabet called DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid). Chromosomes are comprised of DNA. It is DNA that determines the specific proteins that each human being can make, which in turn, control the development of every physical trait, from eye color to hair color, and even race and gender. In short, DNA controls everything about life.

DNA is what ignites the spark of life when conception occurs, as a sperm fertilizes an egg. At that exact moment, DNA initiates cell division processes that stimulate cells to multiply and differentiate according to each person's unique DNA blueprint. The same complement of DNA that triggers the life process in the first place, oversees every stage of development—through the zygote, embryo and fetus phases of gestation, to birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, and old age—right up until the last breath is taken. In effect, each life exists as a continuum that flows seamlessly from conception to death, under the direction of DNA.

Debate has raged for decades regarding the point during pregnancy at which an embryo/fetus should be protected

from abortion. In other words, when, if ever, should abortion be prohibited? When is the fetus sufficiently developed that its life should be considered sacrosanct and worthy of protection from outside interference? Some profess that any time prior to birth is fair game for termination, while others prefer a cutoff at 6 weeks, 15 weeks, or one of the trimesters. Some “pro-lifers” even believe that life should be preserved from the moment the egg is fertilized. Therein lies the crux of an impassioned controversy, the resolution of which points in the direction of DNA.

The integral role of DNA in the life of a human being leaves little doubt that life begins at conception, when the newly formed DNA within a fertilized egg first springs into action. Life is not a delayed-action process that suddenly materializes after 6 weeks, 15 weeks, or 9 months. Those are arbitrary time periods that merely designate various stages of growth. The truth of the matter is that the newly formed DNA of a fetus does not lie dormant for a period of time after fertilization. It acts immediately to put life-generating processes in motion. An abortion conducted any time after conception interrupts the life processes started by DNA, which constitutes the taking of a human life when it is most vulnerable.

Proponents of abortion portray the fetus as a villain, an intruder, whose mere existence somehow threatens the “reproductive rights” of its mother. This heinous distortion of human reproduction affords a pregnant woman the power to sentence her fetus to death, as judge and executioner. Since the 1970s, tens of millions of preborn souls have been brutally killed, their existences abruptly ended without credible justification, as if their lives were of no value whatsoever. To worsen the insult to God and humanity, the remains of these precious, once-viable human beings are either sold off for profit or callously discarded as medical waste. Clearly, the widespread acceptance of abortion as a routine practice is a travesty that demeans God’s truth. That is not to suggest that a pregnancy should never be terminated under any circumstances. However, whether a life is terminated before birth or after birth, the effect is the same and the tragedy is of equal magnitude. In good conscience, that fact cannot be spun any other way. In truth, any law that legalizes abortion, regardless of restrictions or limitations, is a law that sanctions the execution of innocent human beings.

### **The Perversion of Truth: Racism**

After decades of improved race relations, the flames of racial hatred and conflict are being stoked to new heights. Even bedrocks of knowledge are being misused in duplicitous ways. It used to be that arithmetic was straightforward and one could count on the accuracy and reliability of math tables, but things have changed. The reality of mathematics is being challenged. No longer is the equation “ $2 + 2 = 4$ ” considered to be universally true. Math is becoming a relative construct in which objectivity is subjugated by racial preference. Under a new set of norms,

the value of  $2 + 2$  can be anything one chooses it to be, in the interest of equity and diversity. Math must now accommodate the acceptability of incorrect answers, provided that the person performing the computation possesses a suitable racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic background. Objective truth is succumbing to social engineering. How far must we travel down a path of perverted logic to spoil the integrity of something as pure and objective as math?

Claims of racial prejudice in education extend beyond the practice of mathematics. Well-established standardized tests and entrance exams are being phased out due to the unsubstantiated assumption that differences in score results are a function of built-in racial bias. Something is not right when longstanding academic traditions are swept away in short order, without comprehensive analysis, in the pursuit of racial equity. Is it in the interest of truth to indiscriminately attribute disparities in performance or ability to racism when other plausible explanations might exist? Is it in the interest of truth to suggest racism as the root cause behind all of society’s ills?

There is no doubting the existence of racism. Some people are racist and many have suffered dearly at the hands of racists. But isolated instances of racism do not justify claims that our society is systemically racist. Civil rights activities of the 20th century, as evidenced by the passage and enforcement of numerous laws banning racial discrimination, have had great effect. There is still work to be done, but progress is only hindered by exaggerating or misrepresenting the real challenges that remain. To some extent, facts are being twisted to substantiate a hidden agenda that seeks to arouse passions rather than solve problems.

When bigotry exists, it originates in the hearts and minds of individuals. It is a state of mind that can be manifested by people of any race against people of any other race. Even if some are guilty of racism, it is dangerous and unfounded to cast dispersions on an entire group. Justice demands that all people be judged on their own merit and not held accountable for the sins of others. Some feel it is appropriate to accuse a whole race of being racist or claim that racism only exists within a particular race. Ironically, those who besmirch any race with an overarching label of racism bear the guilt of racism themselves.

Martin Luther King, Jr. addressed racism by promoting his dream of a colorblind society, in which people are judged by the content of their character rather than the color of their skin. His vision of looking beyond race has been downplayed or ignored by some supposed civil rights leaders who claim that it is acceptable to judge people by the color of their skin, as long as that color conforms to their own racial stereotyping. Is it in the interest of truth to label every white person as a privileged, white supremacist racist? Tragically, legitimate racial sensitivities can be inflamed into racial tension by unscrupulous charlatans

who serve to deepen, rather than repair, racial division. They see the world exclusively through a racial lens and push their distorted version of reality by promoting fallacious programs, such as Critical Race Theory and the 1619 Project. While purporting themselves to be seekers of racial conciliation, their true purpose is to perpetuate and exacerbate racial conflict. By their way of thinking, racism exists at every turn. Even inanimate objects can be guilty of racism. These self-proclaimed champions of social harmony are successfully turning racism into a cottage industry, which they exploit for their own personal gain.

Current racial perspectives are also being used to unfairly disparage important historical figures, while ignoring the context within which they lived. Crucial parts of United States history are being unjustly erased or altered. It is a fraudulent perversion of reality to denigrate the legacy of iconic national figures, such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln. These grand statesmen, once revered, are now reviled by many, as their statues are destroyed and their names are removed from institutions that were once proud to honor them as namesakes. Of course, even the greatest of our past heroes were not perfect. Although dedicating themselves to serving this country at great personal sacrifice, they were guilty of human frailty and imperfection. Such is the human condition, but their faults should not be isolated and exploited to obscure the memory of the good they accomplished. They deserve to be judged fairly, based on the full measure of how they lived their lives.

Civilization exists within the framework of God's timeline, and the totality of history, once written, whether good or bad, must remain intact. It is ill-advised for any society to skew the events of its past so as to better fit a biased narrative, racial or otherwise, lest history become a deceitful fantasy. Distorting reality, past or present, does not bode well for the future. Humanity should be able to study the mistakes of the past, learn from them, and strive for a brighter future. Calls for historical fact, no matter how painful or disturbing, to be eradicated or revised, are contrary to the interests of truth.

### **Forces Driving the Assault on God's Truth**

There is little doubt that reality is under attack and truth is being ideologically ravaged before our eyes. Up is down, down is up, and lies are increasingly promulgated as truth. In the meantime, society is becoming more polarized and chaotic. How is it that so many people with presumably good intentions have lost sight of reality to such an egregious extent? As a society, how could we have gone so far astray in such a short time that nonsensical beliefs are becoming normalized?

The disconnect from reality first became prevalent in the 1960s, with the advent of the so-called postmodern era and the philosophy of moral relativism upon which it is founded. It is an intoxicating and deceptively liberating philosophy that enables people to define morality and

reality for themselves, based on their own whims and preferences. No longer is God the purveyor of truth. Each of us gets to call our own shots, and under such utopian circumstances, who needs God? The battle between truth and lies, between reality and ideology, fundamentally reflects a repudiation of God's moral truth. Absent the stabilizing force of a fixed moral compass, postmodernism produces lies that masquerade as truth and chaos that masquerades as freedom. It destroys lives by duping innocent people into accepting a false reality, in much the same way that narcotics seduce the vulnerable into addiction. The result is a polarizing war over the very nature of truth. The likelihood of a peaceful end to hostilities is almost nonexistent, and postmodern factions are seizing victory on many fronts.

*"I see a growing polarization in our society.....Two opposing worldviews account for this polarization. One puts man at the center; the other puts God at the center. The two are absolutely irreconcilable. Consensus cannot be reached because the two sides do not even have a basis of agreement with which to begin a discussion."* **Mike Huckabee**

The education system has played a profound role in changing the perceptions of truth. Public schools and most universities have been radically secularized by a postmodern worldview and sanitized of biblical and religious teachings. The ongoing expulsion of God, prayer, and even the slightest semblance of faith, from classrooms across the country, predisposes students to accept a more relativistic, secular view of everything they learn. It also makes students more susceptible to being negatively influenced by teachers whose motives extend beyond teaching, into the realm of indoctrinating rather than educating. This is evident at all levels of education, with elite university professors being among the worst offenders. Truth is at the forefront of ongoing battles between parents, teachers, and school boards, relating to what and how students should be taught. Gender and race are central to that debate. It is no wonder that education is the primary battleground for the fight over truth because the students of one generation become the parents and teachers of the next. Once the minds of students are taken captive, it is only a matter of time before all of society falls victim.

The scariest aspect of moral relativism is that its impact in the new millennium seems to be gaining momentum. Over the last decade, relativistic influences have been on steroids, getting stronger and more destructive. Many people now live a reality that is shockingly unrecognizable to the rest of us. Objective truth is rapidly eroding away into a fleeting shadow of subjectivity, leaving everything open to personal interpretation. Such a relativistic approach to living eventually leads to tragic consequences because life not guided by a morally grounded sense of truth and reality is like a ship without a rudder. It drifts aimlessly, lost in the changing currents of an irrational and misguided world, bereft of the stabilizing force of a divine anchor.

## The Dire Need for Guardians of Truth

The devastating chaos that is tearing apart the fabric of society transcends politics, economics, and other worldly factors. It is the product of an insidious spiritual conflict, and as such, the chaos can only be ameliorated by decisive victory on a spiritual battlefield. The fight is not for the faint of heart. Anyone who takes a pacifist, live-and-let-live approach, is tacitly aiding and abetting the enemy. There is no middle ground to the hostilities and there can be no compromise; the two sides are deeply and diametrically opposed. All of society will have to live with the repercussions of the battle, which depend, in large part, on the quality of leadership coming from churches across America. One would think that the Church would be the first line of defense against the perversion of God's truth, but that is not always the case, and in many instances, the Church is complicit. Houses of God are being overtaken by the influences of a Godless culture. It is ironic that in the name of Christ, many church leaders are mistakenly going along to get along, while turning a blind eye to dark secular forces that seek to eradicate or marginalize Christ. They selectively ignore, and sometimes even endorse, cultural lies, while trying to placate various factions among their congregants, who have already bought in to the lies. Is it in the interest of the Gospel for Christians to stand by while secular bullies harass people into accepting gross perversions of God's truth? It is incumbent upon religious leaders to fulfill their duty to God, by encouraging their followers to honor God's truth and guiding them to take up the fight against those who would pervert it.

Jesus fought for truth in no uncertain terms and did not hesitate to call out and dispute lies. In the Gospel of John, chapter 8, verses 31 and 32 (NIV), John quotes Jesus, *"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* Later, in verses 43 to 45, Jesus goes on to say, *"Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me!"*

In these passages, Jesus describes the battle of truth vs. lies and identifies the enemy of truth. It is an enemy that must be confronted and defeated. Most differences of opinion leave room for rational debate. Reasonable people with opposing viewpoints can amicably seek common ground or agree to disagree. But when deceptive, harmful lies are vigorously proclaimed to be true and blatant attempts are made to fraudulently misrepresent reality, one must consider the possibility that some degree of evil is at work.

Guardians of Truth are desperately needed, people who will stand firm for truth and speak out against the evil tyranny of deception. It is time for every believer to heed the call to become a Guardian of Truth before it is too late—as a

matter of principle, a matter of faith, and a matter of heart. The fate of future generations hangs in the balance. A society that passively stands down as relativism assaults truth from all sides is a society that is well on the road to self-induced destruction. Believers must display courage in speaking truth and confronting lies, even when it is uncomfortable or inconvenient to do so. They must not allow themselves to be shamed or intimidated into silence by those who forcefully insist that everyone must agree with their dystopic view of the world. If people of God succumb to a misguided pursuit of peace and harmony by ignoring or excusing those who reject God's truth, they are effectively condoning an assault against God's teachings. Even a cursory review of the Bible makes it readily apparent that there are consequences for disobedience, and those consequences tend to be imposed on all of society, not just the primary perpetrators. God-fearing people should take heed that subverting His truth is not likely to turn out well at the societal level, even for those who are not personally responsible.

God provides the only legitimate pathway to knowing truth. If we are ever to be free from the chaos of deceit that surrounds us, we must endeavor to stay on the path that God lays out before us, striving to see reality with our own eyes and interpret truth with our own understanding. We must shield ourselves from fallacious arguments that are designed to delude us into agreeing with absurdities, against our better judgment. Jesus provides an excellent example of how to overcome the enemies of truth with courage and wisdom. He was bold in his defense of truth and fearless in his rejection of lies. It was Jesus who taught that only the truth shall set us free, which is precisely why each of us must become a Guardian of Truth. The cause of freedom demands it. Whether in word or deed, regardless of the circumstances, it is our duty to uphold and defend the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—so help us, God.

*"See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ." Colossians 2:8 (NIV)*

*"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you." John 14:16-17 (NIV)*

*"They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood." 1 John 4:5,6 (NIV)*