

“The Essence of Truth”

John 3:31-36

Hello friend and welcome to *Hope for Today*. My name is J. Mark Horst; I’m your friend and Bible teacher. The program you’re listening to is produced by Heralds of Hope, an international Gospel radio and literature ministry.

At Heralds of Hope we believe that true and lasting hope is found only in God, the Creator. He is revealed to us in His Word, the Holy Scriptures. It’s our privilege to come to you each week with a message based on those Scriptures, a message that reveals the truth of God to us.

One reason we have confidence in the Word of God is – the change it effects in the lives of those who accept it and live out its commands. God’s Word, empowered by His Holy Spirit, enables us to discover the truth. On our own, we aren’t capable of doing that because our human intellect is tainted by sin. We need a source of truth outside our limited experience. God and His Word are the source of that truth.

Would you like to know how to find the truth? Well, I hope you can stay tuned because here now is Dr. Yoder with today’s teaching, “The Essence of Truth.”

So much today has the label of truth but contains error. So, we must be able to tell the difference between truth and error.

How can we be sure that we have found the truth? Everybody wants to find the truth. I think only the depraved will rejoice in error. We all want the truth. THE ESSENCE OF TRUTH can be tested from John 3:31-36.

31 *He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.*

32 *And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.*

33 *He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.*

34 *For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.*

35 *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.*

36 *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

John the Baptist sets forth the TESTS which we ought to apply so we will not be deceived. We want to know the essence of truth.

The first test comes by **The Source**.

John suggests that there are two possibilities from which information may come. It may come from the earth; from beneath. If it does, it is only humanistic; that is, it makes man the measure of all things. When it comes from the earth it speaks of the earth, John the Baptist said. Then there is the other possibility that information may come from heaven; that is, from above. Then it would be divine truth and we can be fully confident that it is, in fact, true truth. It would not be mixed with error at all.

Now these two sources may in some way be related. That which is expressed from heaven is related to earth because God had us in mind. We are creatures of earth. When God spoke He spoke with us in mind. Even though these two sources are somewhat related they are not the same. We must therefore test very carefully the source of what is proposed to be the truth. If it comes from heaven, we can be confident, we can be sure, we have true truth.

Then John the Baptist said there are two responses to the source of truth. First, he who has heard and seen tells what he has seen and heard; he bears testimony to the truth. Those are two valid ways of learning: seeing and hearing. One who has seen and heard the divine truth bears witness to that truth. Those who receive this testimony can be sure that God is true.

Then there is the other response which John the Baptist mentions where no man receives his testimony. In other words, they turn away from the evidence.

The response to truth is locked in the breast. It is tied very firmly to the will of man. You can decide to receive heaven's truth, or you can decide to reject heaven's truth. According to John the Baptist there are two sources from which information may come: One source is from earth; the other from heaven. All information must be tested as to its source. If it comes from earth, then beware.

There's a second test that comes by **The Spirit**.

Again, there are two ideas. The one is related to God. We're told that God is true. This is a very important consideration because it deals with the very nature and character of God. In His inmost person, way inside there where nobody can measure or understand, God is true. The Spirit witnesses that to us. Here you have the idea of God's person; He is true, absolutely true, with no mixture of error or falsehood.

The other area is the Word of God, used here in the plural, "Words of God". Now there is a direct relationship between the true God and His Words. We find His words revealed in the Bible. These two ideas are very, very important: the nature of God and the Word of God.

Then there are two affirmations. First, I believe that John the Baptist was telling us that there is a certain standard by which we make our measurements. That standard is the seal of God. It is as though you were to go to a bureau of standards and find there the absolute genuine character of truth. Yes, God has such a standard, the seal of God.

The second affirmation speaks of boundless measure of the Spirit. You see, to get down to the essence of truth every idea and affirmation must be tested by the Spirit.

Then there is a third test that comes by **The Son**.

This Scripture knows two ways. They are very sharply contrasted. The one is the way of belief; he who believes on the Son has everlasting life. That, my friend, is very basic and I'm glad to tell you it is possible. God has made us in such a way that we can believe, and He has made us in such a way that belief is very basic. So, John the Baptist tells us that one who believes, one who takes that way, will have everlasting life. That's one way.

The other way is the way of unbelief. He states that one does not believe the Son. So, there are two ways: one is the way of belief; the other is the way of unbelief. Both of them possible. Also, there are two results. The result which comes from belief is everlasting life. The result of unbelief is the wrath of God.

These are very closely connected with the Son because John the Baptist tells us that he who believes in the Son has everlasting life. And he who does not believe in the Son does not have everlasting life. In fact, the wrath of God abides on him. So, everyone must test his belief by the Son.

We all look to John the Baptist as the forerunner or the announcer of the Messiah. He said there are three tests that must be made if we are to be sure we have the truth. We must test the source whether it comes from heaven or from earth. We must test it by the Spirit as it is directly related to the person and Words of God. We must test it by the Son so that the result will be belief and everlasting life.

Notice how he puts it so well there: He who believes the Son has everlasting life and he who does not believe that Son shall not see life. The wrath of God abides on him. Where are you? Our Heavenly Father, we are grateful that thy Word is so clear and plain. Bless my friend and me as we study it. I ask in Jesus' Name, Amen!

Thank you, Dr. Yoder for teaching us from this portion of Holy Scripture. Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the only source of eternal salvation? If you do, you have everlasting life! But if you don't believe on Him, you are under the sentence of eternal death. I urge you, secure eternal life today by believing on Jesus as your only savior.

My friend, were you blessed by this teaching by Dr. Yoder? If so, you can request an audio CD or a printed copy of this complete teaching, just request it by its title, "The Essence of Truth."

The quickest way for you to contact me is to send an e-mail to mail@heraldsofhope.org. That e-mail address is mail@heraldsofhope.org. That email address again is, m-a-i-l@heraldsofhope.org. Or you may write to *Hope for Today*, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Remember, you can request a printed manuscript or an audio CD of this teaching, "The Essence of Truth." I'd be happy to send one to you.

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Now friend, I urge you to tune in next week as we continue our study in John's Gospel. And until then, keep looking for that blessed HOPE.

