

WHAT IS TRUTH?

I'd like to share an ancient story with you, that dates back thousands of years. Even though it's thousands of years old, it's still relevant to today's world. It goes something like this:



One day a pair of twin brothers stood by a river just outside of town. These brothers looked the same but were very different in their personality. One brother was loved by everyone because he was honorable and dependable. The other brother was despised by everyone because he was sneaky and unreliable.

The loved brother was named Truth, and the despised brother was named Lie. So, these two brothers were standing by this river, and Lie challenged Truth to a race, claiming he could swim across the river faster than Truth. Lie laid out the rules to the challenge stating that they both had to remove all their clothes and at the count of 3, dive into the freezing cold water and swim to the other side and back. Lie counted to 3, and as soon as he said 3, Truth dove in and started swimming like crazy. The thing is, when Truth jumped in, Lie didn't. As Truth swam across the river, Lie put on Truth's clothes and walked back to town dressed up as Truth. He proudly paraded around town pretending to be Truth.

When Truth realized that Lie had tricked him, he swam back to the other side, full of righteous indignation, but his clothes were gone and he was left naked with only Lie's clothes to wear. Refusing to dress himself as Lie, Truth walked back to town naked. People stared and glared as naked Truth walked through town. He tried to explain what happened and that he was in fact Truth, but because he was naked and uncomfortable to look at, people mocked and shunned him; refusing to believe he was really Truth. The people in town chose to believe Lie because he was dressed appropriately and easier to look at. From that day until this day, people have preferred to believe a dressed up lie rather than believe a butt naked truth.

For this study, we're gonna be seeking an answer to one of the biggest questions ever asked, WHAT IS TRUTH. It's essential to our faith to have a clear understanding of what and WHO Truth is, because if we don't have an intimate relationship with Truth, we can easily be fooled by a lie.

John 18:37-38 Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." Pilate said to Him, "**What is truth?**" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all.

Pilate was staring the Truth in the eyes and didn't even realize it. He had been taught a lie his whole life, so when he was confronted with the Truth, he was blind. The problem was that to Pilate, and indeed everyone in the Pagan Roman Empire, Truth was proud. Truth was loud. And Truth looked the part. This culture had believed the lie for so long, that seeing the Truth was uncomfortable. So, to answer his question, "what is TRUTH," we first need to establish WHAT ISN'T TRUTH.

To begin, Truth is objective, not subjective. What I mean is that some people love **black licorice** and some people hate it. I hate it, but if I were to say, "black licorice is the worst candy ever created" that's subject to my feelings and opinion, so it isn't truth. It's taste, and taste isn't truth.

Truth isn't emotion (how we feel)

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Truth isn't perception (how we see)

1 Samuel 16:7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

Truth isn't opinion (how we think)

Proverbs 18:2 A fool has no delight in understanding, But in expressing his own heart.

Truth isn't tradition (how we've been taught)

Colossians 2:8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

The sad truth is that a lot of times, what we think is the truth is actually based on one of these, and all of these can be a well-dressed lie. So much so, that sometimes when we are exposed to the truth, we get uncomfortable. So for this study, we'll be getting acquainted with the truth a little more. That way, when the truth shows up unannounced, we can recognize that it's really the truth.

I have an exercise to help us gain some intimacy with the Truth. It's pretty easy. It's stuff that we already know and have been taught since we were in Sunday school.

We all know about the 3 wise men.

We all know that Noah gathered the animals 2 by 2.

And we know that the Bible tells us the lion will lie with the lamb.



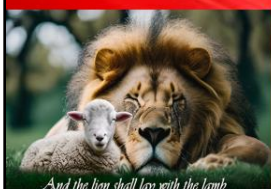
So what can we possibly learn from these simple truths? Well, first of all, that none of them is the truth, and all of them are actually well-dressed lies.



Genesis 7:2 Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female.



Matthew 2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem



Isaiah 11:6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

I believed my whole life that Noah gathered the animals 2x2, that 3 wisemen came to see baby Jesus, and that the Bible said the lion and lamb would lay down together, but scripture shows us differently. My belief that those things were right didn't change

the reality that they are wrong. And sometimes, the fact that we could be wrong, keeps us from embracing the truth and could even cause us to reject it. Sometimes, these little lies can open the door for bigger, better dressed lies that lead us far from Truth.

Romans 1:25 who **exchanged the truth of God for the lie**, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

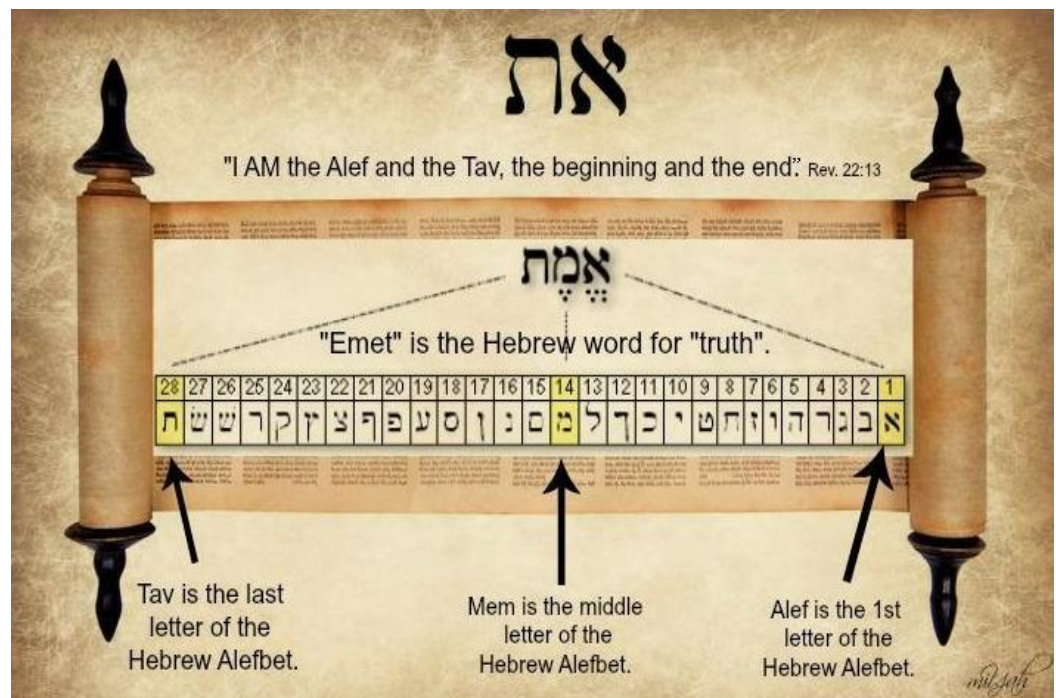
2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because **they did not receive the love of the truth**, that they might be saved.¹¹ And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and **they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables.**

Reading these verses, it's easy to see these folks as the wicked lost, and that's true, but if we look closely, we can see that these same people in these verses HAD the Truth at some point. And they rejected it. This is the direct result of those folks not having an intimate relationship with the Truth. They were easily

deceived and became prideful. They believed they couldn't be fooled, so they didn't make the effort to develop a deep relationship with the Truth. Because of that, when the well-dressed lie showed up, they embraced it wholeheartedly and lost everything. I don't want any of us to be fooled, so it's important to take the time to study the TRUTH and allow it to change how we think and act, but sometimes, studying the Truth can be hard. Now that we know what Truth isn't, let's find out what Truth IS...

There are many Hebrew words that are translated as TRUTH, but the main and most important one is this one is EMET. There're some really awesome things going on with this word. It's made of 3 Hebrew letters, ALEPH, MEM, and TAV.



ALEPH is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, MEM is the middle letter, and TAV is the last letter. The word EMET means the whole TRUTH, from the FIRST to the LAST, from BEGINING to END, ALPHA AND OMEGA, or more accurately, the ALEPH AND TAV.





Another awesome fact about this word, is that if we look at it as it was written in ancient Paleo-Hebrew, we can learn something else about TRUTH.

The pictures on the right show how these letters progressed from what they originally looked like to what they look like now. The pictures on the left show how the Hebrew word EMET looks in modern Hebrew, ancient Hebrew and Paleo-Hebrew.

Now, before we move on, I'd like to be transparent and say that there are some scholars that don't put much stock into seeing anything significant about Paleo-Hebrew. They acknowledge that it was written in pictographs. They acknowledge that those pictographs had the meanings, but that's where it stops. They don't see anything special about how the original pictograph letters were arranged to form the original words. To them, it's just coincidence if the Paleo-Hebrew letters seem to add another layer of depth to the word.

However, there are other respected scholars that **DO** see deeper meaning in why certain letters were used to form certain words. They **DO** see the pictographs as more than coincidence. I say this to let you know that there is debate about this topic among scholars that study ancient Hebrew. I'm no scholar, so all I can do is present what I've learned and let you be the judge if it's powerful or not. So, here's what I've learned.

	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>ALEPH</u></p> <p><i>Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.</i></p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>MEM</u></p> <p><i>Genesis 1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.</i></p> <p><i>John 7:37-39 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.</i></p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>TAV</u></p> <p><i>John 19:30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.</i></p>

The first letter ALEPH is indeed FIRST. Not just in numerical order, but in importance. It's known as the KING of the

Hebrew alphabet and is where our letter A comes from. The pictograph form was an Ox head and it meant strength and leader. It's the beginning and all the other letters come after it. Because of this, the letter ALEPH carries with it the representation of GOD THE FATHER, as in ELOHIM.

The next letter MEM is right in the middle of the alphabet. The pictograph form was of waves and it meant water. It's where our letter M comes from. It carries with it the idea of birth and cleansing. Because of this, GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT is connected with the letter MEM.

The last letter is TAV, and it's the very last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The pictograph form was literally the form of a cross. It got this form because it was the shape of the sticks used to roast the Passover lamb over the fire. It carries with it the idea of finality and finished work. The letter TAV itself means Truth and sign, mark, or symbol. Because of these truths, the letter TAV is a symbol for GOD THE SON.

Here are a few verses that bring these concepts together in a way that, once we understand ALEPH, MEM, TAV, helps us see things in a much bigger picture.

Matthew 3:16-17 *When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. ¹⁷ And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

Revelation 21:6 *And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.*

Now, none of those scholars I mentioned earlier dispute the meanings of the pictographs. And only some of them dispute the importance of those meanings. Basically, they don't disagree with the journey or the landmarks, just the significance of the destination. Like I said, I'll leave it up to you to decide for yourself if this holds any power or not. But to tell the TRUTH, we don't need Paleo-Hebrew to tell us that THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT are Truth..., because we have... the Bible...

The Father is Truth- Psalm 31:5 *Into Your hand I commit my spirit;
You have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.*

The Son is Truth- John 14:6 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

The Spirit is Truth- 1 John 5:6 *This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.*

You want to know the Truth? The TRUTH is we are in a spiritual war at all times. RIGHT NOW there are angels and demons fighting for our attention. The angels want us to focus on the Truth, which is God, and the demons want to distract us FROM the Truth.

Those demons use many tools to distract and deceive us. Money, sex, drugs, relationships, worries, facebook, twitter, snapchat, candy crush, call of duty, whatever works for us to not focus on God.

You see, the Truth is that satan is trying to program us with the music we listen to, the shows and movies we watch, the things we consume, even the things we've been taught to believe about ourselves.

He is trying to brainwash us into believing a lie. BUT We're NOT WHAT society says we are, we are Children of the TRUTH. And as Children of the Truth, we must be diligent in studying and seeking the Truth!

So in all that we do, and all that we say, and all that we believe, let it be based not on traditions, not on emotions, not on opinions, not on perceptions, but let it be based entirely and firmly on the TRUTH. AMEN.