

The Biblical Concept of Truth in the Fourth Gospel¹

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Abstract

*This journal article examines the biblical concept of truth in the Fourth Gospel. The essay provides a synopsis of the lexical data regarding the concept of truth. This is followed by an examination of the various places in the Gospel of John where the Greek noun *alētheia* (which is rendered “truth”) occurs.³ Based on an analysis of the information, it is determined that the author of the Fourth Gospel affirms the established notion of truth found in the Old Testament, post-canonical Jewish writings, and Synoptic Gospels. In brief, the prevailing concept is one of veracity and genuineness in stark contrast to all forms of falsehood. Additionally, it is concluded that the Evangelist refines this understanding by focusing the notion of truth on the Father’s revelation of Himself in His Son. It is maintained that the divine-incarnate Messiah is both the epitome and emissary of truth. Furthermore, it is surmised that the Savior’s followers come to a full awareness and understanding of the truth by believing in Him for salvation and allowing Him to transform every aspect of their lives.*

¹ The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the beliefs of the South African Theological Seminary.

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³ In order to keep the size and scope of this investigation manageable and feasible, the study does not explore in the Fourth Gospel the use of *alēthēs* (meaning “true”, “valid”, and “honest”), *alēthinōs* (meaning “authentic” and “genuine”) and *alēthōs* (meaning “truly” and “actually”). These Greek words tend to share some of the meanings and nuances of *alētheia*, which is the dominant term in the truth vocabulary used in the Gospel of John (cf. Bernard 1962:25-26; Brown 1966:499-501; Dodd 1953:170-171; Hawkin 1987:6; Morris 1995:260; Roberts 2003:2-6).

1. Introduction

In a weblog titled “Absolute Truth” (dated 1 August 2008), the Principal of South African Theological Seminary, Reuben van Rensburg, noted that the “concept of absolute truth is coming under fire more and more”. Likewise, he pointed out that “even in the Christian community” there are individuals who reject the notion of truth being absolute (cf. Hick 1981:5-7). The tragic result is a “further weakening the church in the eyes of the world” (van Rensburg 2008). These observations are confirmed in an extensive survey conducted in 2008 by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. An interview of over 35,000 Americans yielded a detailed snapshot of the religious landscape in the United States (and possibly is suggestive of the situation in other industrialized countries). Within the mainline Protestant churches, 83 percent affirmed that “many religions can lead to eternal life”. Even among those who claimed to be evangelicals, 57 percent registered agreement (Buchanan 2008:7).

This alarming circumstance is due, in part, to the pluralistic age in which we live. In a forthcoming article, I maintain that pluralism represents a worldview and approach to life that runs counter to Christianity. In general, it is an ideology that says there are many valid ways of understanding ultimate reality. More specifically, pluralism asserts that no one religion has the best understanding of the truth. Allegedly, this extends to understanding the infinite existence of God, the nature of the human condition, and the path to salvation. It is claimed that every religion is valid and none are to be refused. Adherents insist it is naïve, intolerant, and presumptuous to contend for the exclusivity of one religion over another (Lioy 2009; cf. Azumah 2007:294-305; Carson 1991:491-492; Hallett 2007:555-571; Köstenberger 2004:428-429).

Even in the first century of the common era, there were those who disdained the notion that there is absolute truth. Consider Pontius Pilate. In the closing hours of Jesus’ earthly ministry, He appeared for questioning before the Roman governor. The Messiah explained that He was “born and came into the

world to testify to the truth" (John 18:37).⁴ He added that "everyone on the side of truth listens to me". In short, Jesus asserted that His goal was to bring truth into the world, not stage a revolt against Rome. Pilate, instead of talking further with the one who is "the way and the truth and the life" (14:6), cut off the conversation with a cynical retort, "What is truth?" (18:38). Köstenberger (2005:33) observed that "it is hard to imagine a more profound question with more momentous consequences".

Tragically, the governor failed to appreciate that the divine-incarnate Messiah is both the epitome and emissary of truth (cf. Roberts 2003:140). The veracity and eternal import of the latter is substantiated by an examination of the biblical concept of truth in the Fourth Gospel. In contrast to the Synoptic Gospels, the notion of "truth is more prominent and its language more frequently used" in the Gospel of John (Woodbridge 2000:827). Moreover, the author's usage of "truth vocabulary" is "much more complex" (Crump 1992:860) and reflects a distinctively Hebraic mindset (Thiselton 1986:889).⁵ These observations provide an incentive for undertaking the study that follows.

2. The Lexical Data Regarding the Concept of Truth

The Greek noun *alētheia*, which is rendered "truth", occurs 109 times in the Greek New Testament and 25 times in the Gospel of John (cf. 1:14, 17; 3:21; 4:23, 24; 5:33; 8:32 [2x], 40, 44 [2x], 45, 46; 14:6, 17; 15:26; 16:7, 13 [2x]; 17:17 [2x], 19; 18:37 [2x], 38; Köhlenberger, Goodrick, and Swanson 1995:43; Moulton, Geden, and Marshall, 2002:40). The term can denote verities that are either objective or subjective nature. Objective truth refers to: what is in accord with reality or fact, regardless of the historical or metaphysical nature of the situation being considered; conditions, matters, and relations pertaining to God and the ethical duties of people; and revelation given by God, whether observed in creation, embodied in the divine-incarnate

⁴ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from *Today's New International Version* (hereafter abbreviated, TNIV).

⁵ The present study supports the view that John the apostle most likely wrote the Fourth Gospel in the latter half of the first century of the common era (cf. Lioy 2005:18-19; Lioy 2007a:15-16).

Messiah, or articulated in doctrine arising from the Bible. Subjective truth denotes the character quality of being sincere, trustworthy, candid, and reliable (cf. Bultmann 1999:242-247; Danker, Bauer, and Arndt 2000:43; Louw and Nida 1989:1:667, 673; Spicq 1994:66; Swanson 2001). In brief, the “truth vocabulary” found in the New Testament has as its locus of meaning “veracity/genuineness” and exists in stark contrast to all forms of “falsehood” (Crump 1992:859; cf. Bultmann 1976:321, 434-436; Piper 1962:4:716; Smith 1999:59, 315; Woodbridge 2000:827). For believers, this is evidenced in a “whole life and walk in truth” (Bromiley 1988:4:927; cf. Holmes 1976:4:827).

These emphases are reflected in the tendency of the Septuagint to use *alētheia* more often than other Greek terms to render the Hebrew noun *’emet* (Hübner 1990:58; Roberts 2003:7, 25; Wildberger 1997:151), which means “faithfulness”, “trustworthiness”, “firmness”, “stability”, and “reliability” (cf. Brown, et al. 1985:54; Jepsen 1997:1:312-316; Köehler, et al. 2001, 1:68-69; Moberly 1997:428-429; Scott 1980:52-53; Wildberger 1997:135). The ancient Greeks tended to think of “truth” as an “abstract or theoretical concept” that is “located . . . in some timeless extra-historical realm.” In contrast, the Hebrews of the Old Testament era and the Jews of the intertestamental period regarded “truth” as being based on God’s faithfulness (cf. Ps 31:5; Isa 65:16). The latter is revealed both in His “words” and “deeds”. Moreover, His “truth is proved in practice in the experience of His people”. Furthermore, people demonstrate their regard for the truth “in their daily witness to their neighbor and their verbal and commercial transactions” (Thiselton 1986:881; cf. Bromiley 1988:926; Kuyper 1964:6; Schwarzschild 2007:162). In short, they prove by their actions that their lives are characterized by honesty, rectitude, and integrity, rather than hypocrisy, falsehood, pretense, and deceit (Thiselton 1986:882-883; cf. Piper 1962:713-714; Spicq 1994:67-68; Wildberger 1997:151-153, 155-156; Woodbridge 2000:826-827).

3. The Use of *Alētheia* in John 1:14 and 17

The biblical concept of truth dominates the literary landscape of the Gospel of John. In light of the information presented in the previous section, Hawkin (1987:11) is correct in his observation that the leitmotif of “truth” presented by the Evangelist should be “differentiated from the intellectualist concept of the

Greeks". For that reason, Dodd (1953:177; cf. 435) seems off the mark in asserting that in the Fourth Gospel the essential meaning of *alētheia* primarily "rests upon common Hellenistic usage", rather than the lexical emphases found in the Old Testament and post-canonical Jewish writings. Additionally, the scholarly consensus is at variance with the claim that *alētheia* "hovers upon the meanings of 'reality', or 'the ultimately real', and 'knowledge of the real'" (cf. similar comments made by Beasley-Murray 1999:14-15; Bultmann 1976:53, 74, 190-191, 509, 533, 606, 655; Bultmann 1999:245-246; Schnackenburg 1987:1:273). Instead, the Greek noun is more closely aligned with the ideas of "integrity or covenant faithfulness" (Keener 2003:418; cf. Brown 1966:500; Smith 1995:16-17; Witherington 1995:176-177). This is especially seen in the Son's "revelation" of the Father. The unveiling of the divine "arises out of the faithfulness of God to his own character, and to his promises, of which [the revelation] is the fulfillment" (Barrett 1960:139).

An examination of the Gospel of John indicates that "truth" is not just a "theological" notion but "more accurately, a Christological concept" (Köstenberger 2005:35). This is seen in the repeated usage of the Greek noun *alētheia*, beginning with the Prologue (1:1-18, esp. vv. 14 and 17). The latter is a gateway to the rest the Evangelist's theological discourse, which has "the cosmos as its setting and eternity as its time frame" (Reinhartz 2001:34). In addition, the Prologue stands as an entry point in which key themes are broached and woven together in a liturgical celebration of the advent of the divine-incarnate Messiah (Lioy 2005:57). A pertinent example would be the claim that the Messiah is the nexus of all truth (cf. 1:17; 14:6). Valentine has noted that the Prologue is "nothing less than the theological matrix" out of which arise "the themes of the gospel". In this "seedbed of the gospel's teaching" the Evangelist showcases a "chain of inter-locking ideas" (1996:293). In turn, this helps to create a significant "christological connection" between the Prologue and the remainder of the Fourth Gospel (Cox 2000:19).

The Prologue can be divided into two main literary sections: (1) the divinity of the Son (vv. 1-8), and (2) the humanity of the Son (vv. 9-18; Lioy 2006b:135). Matthew and Luke began their accounts of Jesus' life with His birth and genealogy. Mark began with the ministry of John the Baptizer, who paved the

way for the Messiah. In contrast, the first words in the Fourth Gospel echo the first words of Genesis. Indeed, the Evangelist takes readers back to the dawn of creation with the phrase "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1). John clearly identified the "Word" (or in Greek, *logos*) as Jesus in verse 14. Since the Word existed "in the beginning", the Word could not be a created being. In reality, the Word was God and with God at the same time (v. 1). Though distinct persons, God the Father and God the Son share the same divine nature (along with God the Holy Spirit). The one whom believers call Jesus was with His Father in the beginning. Moreover, through Jesus, God brought all things into existence (John 1:2-3; cf. Col 1:16; Heb 1:2).

John 1:14 and 17 are of particular interest to this study. The Evangelist declared that the one who is eternal in His preexistence and enjoys the intimate, personal fellowship of the Father and the Spirit, completely entered the sphere of time-bound existence. According to Tillich (1955:38), the Word is "the divine self-manifestation" who through His incarnation makes the transcendent Lord immanent in a personal way within the human experience. Waetjen (2001:265) builds on this thought by observing that the enfleshment of the Logos "constitutes the objectification of truth". The phrase translated "made his dwelling among" (v. 14) literally means "to pitch a tent" or "to live temporarily". Jesus left His heavenly dwelling and took up residence on earth, volunteering to live within the limitations of natural human experience. The term "dwelling" would probably be associated by Jewish readers with the tabernacle, upon which the glory of God had rested (cf. Roberts 2003:64-65).

The Evangelist could personally attest to the "glory" of the one who came from heaven. John was probably alluding to the Transfiguration, which he personally witnessed (cf. Matt 17:2; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:29; 2 Pet 2:16-18). The idea behind the Greek noun *doxa* includes the notions of splendor and grandeur (Lioy 2005:82). This glory was that of the unique Son of God. The superlative nature of the Word is highlighted by the declaration in John 1:14 that the Messiah is full of "grace" (*charis*) and "truth" (*alētheia*). In the Old Testament, the equivalent notions would be God's enduring love (*hesed*) and faithfulness (*'emet*, respectively; cf. Gen 24:27; Ps 26:3; Lindsay 1993:131), which were the basis for His covenantal mercy to His people through Moses and others (cf. Exod 33:18-19; 34:6-7; Ps 25:10; Jon 4:2; Kuyper 1964:3-4).

From a New Testament perspective, the Lord's grace, or unmerited favor, is the reason believers are saved (Eph 2:8).

Eternal redemption is made possible through the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah, who is the truth (John 14:6). In 1:14, the use of *alētheia* in reference to the Son indicates that He is the complete embodiment and perfect manifestation of divine reality, especially as communicated through His words, deeds, and life (Hübner 1990:59). This is evident in Him becoming "flesh". The fact of the Incarnation means that the Son not only "took on human history" (O'Collins 1995:47), but also provides "an anchor in history (including its geographic and ethnic rootedness) for Christianity" (Schwarz 1998:221). Moreover, in the Word resides the "plentitude of divine glory and goodness" (Bruce 1983:43). Verse 16 provides a conceptual link back to the superlative nature of the Logos by noting that with the Son's advent, the inexhaustible grace of God the Father has been fully manifested. To those who had already been blessed by His unmerited favor, there continued to be an inexhaustible supply of grace piled on top of grace. Such was the superlative nature of being redeemed.

Verse 17 develops further the notion of the Son as both the epitome and emissary of truth by contrasting Him with Moses. "Law" (*nomos*) refers to the "body of teaching revealed to Moses" and which constituted "the foundation of the whole socio-religious life and thought of Israel" (Pancaro 1975:515). The spiritual elite of Jesus' day considered the Mosaic law to be a divine gift or blessing, for the Lord revealed Himself through it (Barrett 1975:26; cf. Heb 1:1). Ultimately, the law that Moses gave pointed to the promised Messiah of Israel (cf. John 5:46; Gal. 3:24-25), who is the supreme and final revelation of the triune God (cf. Heb 1:2-3). This view is strengthened by the theory put forward by Hanson (1991:24) that the "pre-existent Logos" should be identified with the theophany Moses encountered on Mount Sinai (cf. Exod 33-34), and that the "references to sin and forgiveness in the narrative" foreshadow not only the "revelation in Christ", but also His "redemptive activity". In addition to Moses, Abraham and Isaiah foresaw the advent of the Redeemer (cf. John 8:56; 12:41; Lioy 2007a:159-160, 204-205). Despite the limited perspective of these and other Old Testament saints, they were somehow aware of the Son's humiliation and exaltation (cf. Deut 18:15, 18;

Pss 2:1-2, 22; 28:16; 118:22; Isa. 52:13–53:12; Matt. 21:42; Luke 24:25-27, 44-47; Acts 4:11, 25-26; 1 Cor 10:3).

The parallelism of John 1:17 is best understood as being synthetical, rather than antithetical, in nature (Roberts 2003:72-74; Willett 1992:41-42). According to Casselli, the emphasis is on redemptive-historical fulfillment rather than displacement (cf. Thomas 1987:155-156). With the backdrop being an “eschatological framework”, the “old order is, in Christ, giving way to the new aeon of fulfillment” (Casselli 1997:15). Thus, whatever “implied contrast” there is operative “in this verse, the precise nature of the contrast is ambivalent” (Casselli 1997:36). In the same vein, Ellis (1984:26) notes that the “contrast between Moses and Jesus is not meant to denigrate Moses but rather to extol Jesus”. As Bultmann (1951:16) points out, “Jesus did not polemically contest the authority of the Old Testament” or call into question its validity. Ridderbos (1997:58) likewise observes that John was not talking about “the substitution of one grace for the other”; instead, the Evangelist’s emphasis was on the “continuation, renewal, and maintaining of the old”. Thus, the gift of the triune God’s revelation in the Word stands much more in continuity than in discontinuity with the gift of the Lord’s self-revelation through the law of Moses (cf. Liroy 2006a). Additionally, God’s grace and truth to His covenant people in the Old Testament, which was mediated through the law (cf. Gen 24:27; Exod 34:6), foreshadowed the fullness of His blessings in Christ (Heb 10:1). In a sense, the incarnation of the Word complements and completes, rather than displaces and eliminates, what God began to reveal and do through the giving of the law at Sinai (cf. Rom 5:20-21; Liroy 2007b).

Admittedly, not even the law could convey all there is to know about God. After all, He is eternal in His existence, infinite in His presence and power, unsurpassed in His knowledge and understanding, and unlimited in His mercy, grace, and love. He is so radiant in His splendor (1 Tim 6:16) that no one can survive the direct sight of His glory (Exod 33:20; cf. Liroy 2007a:27; Liroy 2008:35, 40-41, 43, 101-102, 125-126, 128). While no one has ever set their eyes on the essential being of the triune God (John 1:18; 6:46; 1 John 4:12), the Son has made Him known. In point of fact, as the divine, incarnate Logos, Jesus embodies all that the Torah anticipated and declared (Liroy 2005:85). Grappe (2000:153) affirms that the Son, by “virtue of his unique nature”, is

“the one who transcends the most prestigious figures and institutions of the past”. Accordingly, Jesus’ followers are the ones who truly submit to the law’s “ultimate eschatological expression”, namely, the Messiah (Keener 2003:421). Borgen (1983:104) goes so far as to conclude that John used “terminology which usually belongs to the Torah” in order to transfer “the Torah’s function to Jesus”.

John 1:18 states that no one has ever seen God; yet in the Old Testament there seem to have been appearances of God. Be that as it may, while people of earlier times saw special appearances of God, as Moses did on Mount Sinai (Exod 33:18-23), these encounters did not reveal God’s essential being. The human eye can neither detect His fully revealed essence nor survive the direct sight of His glory. The Son, in His human form, introduced the Father to humankind. The Greek verb *exēgeomai*, which the TNIV renders “has made him known”, means “to expound” or “to set forth in great detail” (Danker, Bauer, and Arndt 2000:349; cf. Louw and Nida 1989:1:340). This is the same word from which is derived the English term *exegesis*, which means “to explain” or “to interpret” (Lioy 2005:86; cf. Thomas 1987:154). What could not be previously explained about the triune God is now elucidated by the Son, who is both the epitome and emissary of truth. Moreover, He has revealed the Godhead with stunning clarity through His “ministry and proclamation” (Westermann 1998:6). In reality, the divine-incarnate Logos is “the Ultimate Fact of the universe” (Tenney 1976:63). It is no wonder that Jesus declared to Philip, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (14:9).

4. The Use of *Alētheia* in John 3:21

The literary context of John 3:21 is the conversation Nicodemus had with Jesus in the winter of A.D. 27.⁶ According to verse 1, Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a “member of the Jewish ruling council” (or the Sanhedrin), the latter being the religious supreme court of the day. Also, verse 10 reveals that Nicodemus was a “teacher” or rabbi. In the exchange that followed, Jesus explained to Nicodemus that the Holy Spirit brings about the new birth when a person trusts in the Messiah for salvation (vv. 4-16). The heavenly court of

⁶ The dates for the life of Christ used in this essay are based on the timeline appearing in the *Zondervan TNIV Study Bible* (2006:1656-1658).

divine justice forms the backdrop of the Father's condemnation of those who reject the Son (vv. 17-18). The fact is that God sent the one who is Light into the world (cf. 1:2-5, 9). Tragically, though, morally depraved people love the darkness of Satan and sin (John 3:19). Because their lives are characterized by disobedience (cf. Eph 2:2) and steeped in wickedness (cf. Rom 1:32), they dread the possibility of coming in faith to the Light. Also, because they realize He will expose their sins, they hate Him and His followers all the more (John 3:20; cf. 15:18-25).

In contrast are those practice the "truth" (*alētheia*, John 3:21). The verse is more literally rendered "act in such a way that truth comes into being" (Ridderbos 1997:142). Here the Evangelist used a "Semitic expression" that "means 'to act faithfully', 'to act honestly'" (Carson 1991:207; cf. Gen 47:29; Neh 9:33; Barrett 1960:182; Schnackenburg 1987:407). The focus is on God's revelation of Himself, as embodied in the divine-incarnate Messiah. Piper (1962:716) explains that "all progress in the apprehension of truth" is dependent on an individual's "willingness to accept the indwelling truth as the regulatory principle of both knowledge and actions". Accordingly, Jesus' followers demonstrate by their lives of piety and integrity that they readily come to the Light and take seriously the objective truth He makes known (cf. 1 John 1:6; Lindsay 1993:134-135). They do not fear any kind of moral exposure—not because they are free from sin, but because they want to be cleansed by God's grace. When others see that God enables them to be people of rectitude and virtue, He is glorified.

5. The Use of *Alētheia* in John 4:23-24

The literary context for John 4:23-24 is the conversation Jesus had with a Samaritan woman. The Fourth Gospel leaves as indefinite the time interval between the visit of Nicodemus to Jesus and the testimony of John the Baptizer concerning the Savior (John 3:22-36). In turn, the chronological relation between these sections and Jesus' conversation with a Samaritan woman (4:1-42) is not specified. Most likely, the latter occurred sometime during the winter of A.D. 27. The locale was Sychar, a small village in the province of Samaria (v. 5). As a result of the exchange between Jesus and the woman, she concluded that He was a prophet (v. 19; i.e., a divinely inspired

person with supernatural knowledge and insight). Based on this observation, the woman tried to deflect the conversation away from her sinful lifestyle by bringing up the controversy between Samaritans and Jews regarding the proper place to worship (v. 20). To her it was a suitable religious question for a prophet to give his authoritative assessment.

Jesus used the mention of the inter-racial debate to strike at the heart of the woman's problem. She was concerned with an external aspect of worship, that is, the right place to venerate God. Jesus made her focus on the internal aspect of worship, namely, venerating God with a cleansed heart. Here we see that the woman's frame of reference needed to be adjusted. Jesus began to do this by bluntly stating that in the coming day of eschatological fulfillment, it would not matter where people worshiped—be it Mount Gerizim or Mount Zion (v. 21). After all, the Messiah surpassed in importance all earthly shrines and sanctuaries, even the temple in Jerusalem. Kerr (2002:167) states that with the advent of the Messiah, a "new era" has dawned. From the post-resurrection perspective of the Evangelist, "Moses and the law, including the Temple and associated rituals and festivals, are not ends in themselves, but signposts pointing towards Jesus Christ." The Son becomes "the *raison d'être* of Judaism" in which worship is "no longer centered in a place, but in Spirit and truth".

Next, Jesus addressed the issue the woman had raised. The Samaritans acknowledged the true God, but they worshiped Him in ignorance. Since they considered only the Pentateuch as sacred, they ignored the prophets. The Jews worshiped God as He revealed Himself in the entire Hebrew Bible. The Messiah clearly sided with the Jews on this issue by identifying Himself with them through the emphatic use of the Greek word rendered "we" (v. 22). God had chosen the Jews to be the vehicle through which He would reveal His plan of redemption. Put another way, "Judaism is the trajectory of religious history through which God has been at work" (Burge 2000:145). The time was soon coming, however, when a Jew, a Samaritan, or any other person could freely worship the Lord—as long as that person did so "in spirit and in truth" (*alētheia*; v. 23, NIV; cf. Josh 24:14; Köstenberger 2005:44; Lindsay 1993:135-137). Indeed, the opportunity had been inaugurated with the Messiah's advent (which included His death, resurrection, and ascension). Schnackenburg (1987:1:438) comments that Jesus' "revelation of the true

worship of God is well illustrated by the Qumran texts, but it goes beyond them, since Jesus proclaims that the eschatological fulfillment has come”.

To worship in spirit is to do so “honestly and openly” from the heart “with God” (Tenney 1981:56) and in the power of the Holy Spirit (Keener 2003:616), not merely to go through the motions of worship (cf. Bernard 1962:149; Haenchen 1984a:223; Morris 1995:239). The latter is frequently characterized by an obsession with being at the right place and performing approved rituals. Be that as it may, Jesus did not imply that “true worship is realized totally in the sphere of the supersensuous” or that it must be “elevated above the visible temporal word or any cultic form” (Ridderbos 1997:163). To worship in truth means to do so in a way that “accords with reality” (Thiselton 1986:891). Expressed differently, it is to reverence the Father as He has disclosed Himself in the Son (cf. 1:18), not as would-be worshipers have created God in their own minds (cf. Bultmann 1976:190-191). Indeed, He actively seeks people who worship Him with veracity, genuineness, and dedication (cf. Lindsay 1993:136-137). Here it is revealed that the essential nature of God is “pure spirit” (Bruce 1983:111), which means the divine is immaterial in His existence (4:24; cf. Isa 31:3; Ezek 36:26-27; Cook 1979:106; Hendriksen 1987, 1:168). Westcott (1981:73) notes that God is “absolutely free from all limitations of space and time”. This verse “points to the reality of God as the absolute Power and Life Giver” (Saucy 2006:91), especially as seen in the believers’ encounter with Him in Spirit-filled, truth-centered worship (cf. Carson 1991:225-226).

6. The Use of *Alētheia* in John 5:33

John 5 specifically deals with Jesus healing a paralytic at the pool of Bethesda and His divine authority to perform the miracle on the Sabbath. By recounting this episode, the Evangelist validated the theological truth that the Son is the culmination (i.e., the destination, goal, outcome, and fulfillment) of the law for believers. Moreover, as the Lord of the Sabbath, He provides eternal rest for His disciples (Liroy 2007a:109). The mention of “some time later” (v. 1) is an indefinite temporal reference. Most likely, the incident (recorded in vv. 5-9) occurred between A.D. 27 and 29. The incident of the Redeemer’s healing on the Sabbath was not a one-time event. Because it was something He did on

numerous occasions, it challenged the authority of the religious leaders. They responded by persecuting Him. This included not only opposing Him verbally, but also exploring ways to have Him tried, convicted, and executed (vv. 16, 18).

In verses 19-30, Jesus asserted His divinely-given authority to heal on the Sabbath. The Jewish leaders, of course, contested His claim. Like a skilled defense attorney, Jesus acknowledged that if He alone testified about Himself, what He declared would be invalid (5:31; cf. 8:13). This is because the Old Testament required at least two confirming witnesses to validate whatever testimony was given in a court of law. Adhering to this requirement would help to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the assertions being made (cf. Num 35:30; Deut 17:6; 19:15). Regrettably, the experts in the law did not accept the truth regarding the Son's relationship with the Father. The elitists also failed to recognize Jesus as the Prophet of Deuteronomy 18:15 and 18, whom God promised to send and whom Moses commanded God's people to heed (cf. Acts 3:22; 7:37). The religious leaders' stance of unbelief openly disregarded the corroborating witnesses provided by John the Baptizer (John 5:33), the Redeemer's own miracles (v. 36), the Father in heaven (v. 37), and Scripture (particularly through Moses; vv. 39, 46; cf. Asiedu-Peprah, 2001:27-28).

The one who is the realization of all the types and prophecies recorded in the law declared that the testimony offered by the Father about the Son was true (that is, accurate and valid; v. 32). Neither did it matter whether the religious leaders accepted the assertions made by the Father, for whatever He declared remained intrinsically valid (cf. Rom 3:3-4). In John 5:33, the Messiah noted that previously the religious leaders in Jerusalem sent a delegation of priests, Levites, and Pharisees to interrogate John the Baptizer and he testified to the "truth" (*alētheia*) about the Son (cf. 1:19, 24). In 5:33, the grammatical construction of the Greek words rendered "the truth" is best understood as a dative of interest. The idea is that the Baptizer, in bearing witness, provided objective, factual statements pertaining to the Messiah, especially in declaring Him to be the embodiment of truth (cf. 8:32; Barrett 1960:220; Köstenberger 2005:44). In short, Jesus is the "supreme Revealer, unveiling and manifesting to the fullest the divine secrets" (Spicq 1994:77). Admittedly, Jesus had no implicit need for any human witnesses. Instead, His motive was to use these to

convince His opponents to accept Him as the divine, incarnate Word and as a result be saved (5:34).

7. The Use of *Alētheia* in John 8:32, 40, 44, 45, and 46

The context of John 8 is Jesus ministering at the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles in October, A.D. 29. The narrative brings into sharp relief the lawsuit motif found throughout the Fourth Gospel (cf. Neyrey 1987:535). According to Lincoln (2000:45), the forensic element is a reworking of the lawsuits recorded in Isaiah 40–55. Moreover, in the Fourth Gospel, Israel becomes the “representative of the world” (2000:46), especially as the evidence is presented in the universal court of justice regarding Jesus and His messianic claims. The nations are “represented through the Samaritans,” who affirm that Jesus is the Savior of humankind (John 4:42), and the Greeks, who want to meet Jesus (12:20–22). Furthermore, Jesus’ “climactic trial before Pilate . . . sets the lawsuit squarely on the world stage and in the context of the nations” (256). Throughout the forensic process (as seen in the Fourth Gospel’s cosmic-trial metaphor), Jesus functions as “God’s authorized agent and chief witness” (2000:46).

The preceding information helps to explain why, in John 8, the religious leaders, in their interrogation of Jesus, conveyed their “response in legal language, perhaps preparing the sort of argument that could later prove useful in a forensic context” (Keener 2003:740; cf. Lindars 1986:330). Köstenberger (2004:250) adds that “in a reversal of the Synoptic portrayal of Jesus as on trial before the Romans and the Jews, John shows how it is not Jesus, but ultimately the world (including the Jews), that is on trial.” Indeed, the irony is that the person who is eventually tried and condemned by the religious and civil authorities of the day turns out to be their Creator and Judge (as well as that of all humankind). John 8:30-47 serves as a prime example of the confrontational dynamic between Jesus and His interlocutors. He maintained that as the Messiah, He is the epitome and emissary of truth—especially in revealing the Father and elucidating His will (cf. Bruce 1983:196-197; Brown 1966:355; Lindsay 1993:138-139).

After Jesus had finished speaking, many people in the crowd put their faith in Him (v. 30). Next, Jesus declared that by continuing in His teaching, would-be

disciples showed the genuineness of their decision to follow Him. Conversely, those who failed to persevere demonstrated the superficiality of their faith (v. 31). Moreover, abiding in the "truth" (*alētheia*; v. 32) taught by the Son was an eternally serious matter (cf. Carson 1991:348-349). For instance, those who remained unwavering in their commitment to Him would come to a fuller understanding of and appreciation for the pronouncements He made. In point of fact, He is the embodiment of truth (cf. 14:6) and leads His followers (through what He taught) to genuine and lasting freedom from slavery to sin (cf. Ladd 1997:303). Beasley-Murray (1999:133) clarifies that the "revelation of Christ is inseparable from his redemptive action." Likewise, the "knowledge of the truth is not alone intellectual, but existential". It signifies life "under the saving sovereignty of God".

Keener (2003:750) explains that "Jewish texts speak of the Torah bringing freedom, whether from worldly cares, from national bondage, or from slavery in the coming world" (cf. Gen Rab. 92:1; Num Rab. 10:8; Pesiq Rab. 15:2). The freedom anticipated in the Torah finds its ultimate fulfillment in the redemptive work of the Messiah. In contrast, possessing mere intellectual knowledge can never lead to the same result, regardless of how scintillating that information might seem. Furthermore, there is no spiritual freedom in possessing truth in the abstract philosophical sense (cf. Morris 1995:261, 405; Ridderbos 1997:308). The focus in the Fourth Gospel is on the person and work of the Messiah (cf. Schreiner 2008:95). Only faith in Him can deliver people from the darkness of sin (cf. Dahms 1985:459).

Jesus' listeners bristled at the notion of being set free, for it implied that they were somehow in bondage. They failed to realize that the Messiah was speaking about slavery to sin. His listeners, however, took His remarks concretely and narrowly as a reference to their political and economic status as Jews. The Savior's audience retorted that they were descendants of Abraham and had never been slaves to anyone (v. 33). This overly generalized assertion failed to account for years of bondage to such despotic rulers as the Assyrians and Babylonians. In response, Jesus explained that He was talking about bondage to sin. This was certainly the case for those whose lifestyle was characterized by incessant wrongdoing (v. 34). The latter included a stubborn refusal to accept Jesus' messianic claims and authority, despite the mountain

of confirming evidence. Only God's intervention could bring a change of heart.

The Son was unapologetic about maintaining that even His Jewish listeners needed to be freed from sin, for He knew that all had transgressed and fallen short of God's glory (cf. Eccles 7:20; Isa 59:2; Rom 3:23). This continued to be the case regardless of one's physical ancestry. As long as Jesus' critics remained in spiritual bondage to sin, they could never enjoy a permanent status within the family of God. In contrast, by putting their faith in the Messiah, they could be given the never-ending right to become God's children (John 8:35; cf. 1:12). Thus, only by trusting in the Son could His listeners truly be released from their bondage to sin (8:36).

The one who is infinitely greater than Abraham had not overlooked the claims of His Jewish listeners to being descendants of the patriarch (v. 33). The Savior readily admitted this fact, though it did not negate the fact that Abraham's true spiritual descendants were those who put their faith in the Messiah for salvation (cf. Rom 4:9-17; 9:8). Paradoxically, despite the claims of Jesus' critics, they revealed by their actions that they were not Abraham's spiritual descendants. Köstenberger (2004:265) states that while Abraham was "receptive to the divine revelation and acted in obedience to it", the religious elite of Jesus' day—who claimed to be the patriarch's descendants—failed to follow the moral example he set. Indeed, among them were those who sought to bring about Jesus' arrest and execution. This was part of their agenda because the Savior's teaching had found no place in their hearts (John 8:37). Expressed differently, what the Son declared made no headway in their lives due to their unbelief.

In faithfulness to His Father, the Son declared to His audience what He had seen in His Father's presence. In contrast, Jesus' detractors operated according to the dictates of their spiritual "father" (v. 38), which verse 44 reveals was the devil. Because they drank heavily from the cesspool of his toxic doctrines, they refused to accept Jesus as the divine-incarnate Word and acknowledge that He represented the interests of the Father. Perhaps there was an element of consternation as Jesus' listeners declared Abraham to be their father (v. 39). Members of the Jewish community in the Second Temple period often referred to Abraham as their father and themselves as his descendants (cf.

Exod 4:22; Deut 14:1-2; 4 Macc 6:17, 22; 18:1; Gen Rab. 1:4; Matt 3:9; Gal 3:7).

Scripture reveals Abraham to be a person characterized by faith in and obedience to the Lord (cf. Rom 4:1-25; Heb 11:8-12, 17-19; Jas 2:21-23). In contrast, Jesus' audience, while being Abraham's biological descendants, showed by their actions that they were not his spiritual descendants. Otherwise, they would have accepted Jesus' messianic claims and authority. In reality, the religious leaders were searching for a way to arrest and execute the Son of God, because they were outraged by the "truth" (*alētheia*; v. 40) He taught, which came from His Father in heaven (cf. O'Day 1995:9:637). Because Abraham was never guilty of such a murderous intent, it was clear that Jesus' listeners imitated their real spiritual father, the devil. In protest, the audience rejected any accusation of having someone else other than God as their Father. They might have also insinuated that Jesus was born out of wedlock, being the illegitimate son of Joseph (v. 41).

Despite such insults, Jesus did not waver from His claim of originating with God, being sent by Him, and operating under His authority. Thus, if the Messiah's critics truly had God as their Father, they would love, rather than despise, His Son (v. 42). In reality, their hearts were spiritually hardened to the truth concerning the Redeemer, and this prevented them from understanding and accepting His teaching (v. 43). Satan, the god of this age, had blinded their unbelieving minds, making them unable to recognize the light of the glorious gospel about the Messiah, who is the exact likeness of God (cf. 2 Cor 4:4). The murderous intent of the antagonists toward the Son indicated they were the devil's spiritual offspring and sought to do the same sorts of evil things he desired (cf. 1 John 3:8-15).

Jesus noted that from the dawn of time, Satan was a murderer, rejected the "truth" (*alētheia*; v. 44), and was devoid of "truth" (*alētheia*). In keeping with his deceitful character, he not only lied, but also was the father of all lies. It stood to reason that those who followed the devil's wicked ways would spurn, rather than accept, the Messiah and the "truth" (*alētheia*; v. 45) He declared (cf. Köstenberger 2005:59). Despite the opinion of His critics to the contrary, Jesus had an absolutely clear conscience about His message and ministry. Because He knew He was sinlessly perfect (cf. 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1

John 3:5), He risked asking His opponents whether any of them could prove Him to be guilty of committing sin. Of course, the answer was no. Accordingly, since the Son always did His Father's will, those who also claimed the Lord as their Father should have believed the Messiah and the "truth" (*alētheia*; v. 46) He taught.

8. The Use of *Alētheia* in John 14:6 and 17

The second half of the Fourth Gospel continues to present Jesus as both the epitome and emissary of truth. Whereas in chapters 1–12, the emphasis is on the signs performed by the Son of God, in chapters 13–21, the principal focus is on the salvation He provides. The time period is the spring of A.D. 30, during the last week of Jesus' life on earth before His crucifixion. The Last Supper forms the literary backdrop of chapter 14. Jesus spoke about leaving His followers and them knowing the way to where He was going (vv. 1-4). In response, Thomas exclaimed that he and his peers neither knew where Jesus was going nor the way to get there (v. 5). According to (Carson 1991:490), the question asked by Thomas "sounds as if he interpreted Jesus' words in the most crassly natural way".

Jesus' reply to Thomas is the most profound "I am" declaration in John's Gospel (cf. Ridderbos 1997:493). Jesus not only identified who He was, but made it clear that He is the only possible path to God (14:6). In all likelihood, the Greek coordinating conjunction *kai*, which is rendered "and", is used in an "exegetical or explanatory" sense to clarify and emphasize what Jesus meant in declaring Himself to be "the way" (Brown 1966:621). In light of this observation, the verse might be rendered, "I am the way, that is to say, the truth and the life" (cf. Beasley-Murray 1999:252; Bultmann 1999:246; Hawkin 1987:3, 10; O'Day 1995:742; Spicq 1994:77; Whitacre 1999). Furthermore, the repetition of the definite article, which is rendered "the", points to the Son as being the enfleshment of absolute truth (cf. Haenchen 1984b:125; Thiselton 1986:891-892; Waetjen 2001:278), in contrast to all other forms of truth (which are partial and deficient). He is also the eternal life, in distinction from every other form of life (which is finite and transitory; cf. Cook 1979:92-93; Bruce 1983:299; Hendriksen 1987, 1:268; Hoskyns 1947:455; Lindars 1986:472; Roberts 2003:119; Tenney 1981:144).

According to Azumah (2007:303-304), “there are three dimensions to truth”: (1) the “propositional and cognitive dimension”; (2) “truth as praxis”; and (3) “truth as a person or life”. Jesus laid exclusive “claim to the fact that he combined all the three dimensions of truth in himself”. Despite all the lies that were charged against Jesus during and after His public career, His words, deeds, and character have shown Him to be the embodiment of “truth” (*alētheia*; cf. Dahms 1985:457-458; Fernando 1999:185; Lindsay 1993:140; Schineller 2000:427). Nothing He ever taught has proved unreliable. In the Messiah believers witness the supreme revelation of the Father in action; and what better proof of knowing that Jesus is the source and sustainer of life than His spectacular resurrection. Indeed, only Jesus has the power over life and death. Previously Jesus’ disciples had not fully known Him. They had seen glimpses of His true identity and had a partial understanding of who He was—but they had not fully experienced Him. If they had, they would have known that they were seeing what God the Father is like by seeing the Son. In the coming days, however, they would know Jesus and thus they would know God (v. 7).

The Messiah did not limit His statements to Himself. He also focused on the way in which He wanted to His followers to live. Morality for the ancient Hebrews was not an abstract concept disconnected from the present; rather, it signified ethical imperatives concerning how people of faith should live. Accordingly, the Messiah stated that those who genuinely loved Him also kept His commands (v. 15). As an encouragement to those who would love and obey Him, the Savior promised that His disciples would have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The third person of the Trinity would come and make His home in believers so that their love could be clearly defined and their obedience could be carefully directed.

The Son, by referring to the Spirit as “another advocate” (v. 16), indicated that the latter is the same kind of counselor, intercessor, and comforter as the Messiah Himself was to the disciples. Expressed differently, the Spirit comes to the believers’ aid to help them meet every challenge to their faith. Moreover, He is the “Spirit of truth” (*alētheia*; cf. 1 John 4:6; 5:6), in which the Greek text possibly uses an attributive or descriptive genitive; in other words, as the “mediator of divine revelation” (Lindsay 1993:141), He is the Spirit characterized by truth (cf. Beare 1987:115; Bernard 1962:499; Bultmann

1999:247; O'Day 1995:773). A second possibility is that the genitive is appositive, in which case the phrase could be rendered "the Spirit is truth" (Brown 1966:639; cf. Hendriksen 1987, 1:277).

A third possibility is to understand the phrase as a genitive of source (cf. Westcott 1981:205). This means the Spirit discloses and communicates the truth about God (cf. Barrett 1960:386; Burge 2000:396), shows what is true, "inspires and illumines" the truth "by pointing back to Jesus" (Keener 2003:618), and leads believers into all truth (John 14:17). While the latter involves an "intellectual" comprehension of "theological truths", even more important is the "full personal apprehension of the saving presence" of the Father that has come in the incarnation of the Son (Ladd 1997:304). In these ways, the Spirit remains ever present to help believers understand, accept, and apply what the eternal Word commanded (cf. Crump 1992:861).

9. The Use of *Alētheia* in John 15:26

Once Jesus expressed His devotion to His followers and His Father, the Messiah summoned the disciples to prepare to leave the upper room (John 14:31). Recorded in 15:1-17 is the analogy of the vine (representing Jesus) and the branches (symbolizing His followers). Verses 18-25 record Jesus' statements about the world's hatred of Him and His disciples. In verse 26, Jesus promised that He would send the Holy Spirit to bear witness to Him. The Spirit would emphasize not only the significance of the Son's earthly ministry but also the import of His atoning sacrifice on the cross and resurrection from the dead (cf. Morris 1995:607). The Son referred to the Spirit as the Advocate, the one who is characterized by "truth" (*alētheia*), and the one who comes from the Father to impart truth to believers (cf. Beare 1987:117; Roberts 2003:195; Westcott 1981:224).

10. The Use of *Alētheia* in John 16:7 and 13

John 16 is one the Bible's chief passages describing the Holy Spirit and His work. Jesus revealed that the Spirit of God, like a legal counselor, would act as a prosecutor to bring about the world's conviction. He does not merely accuse the world of wrongdoing, but also presents indisputable evidence to prove the

world's sinfulness.(cf. Roberts 2003:190, 192; Thiselton 1986:892) The Spirit would establish the case of the Father and Son against nonbelievers by presenting evidence in three different areas: sin, righteousness, and judgment (v. 8). In verse 7, Jesus used the Greek noun *alētheia*, which is rendered “very truly”, to emphasize the veracity and trustworthiness of His statements concerning the divine necessity of His departure and the provision of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus’ referred to as the Advocate (cf. Keener 2003:1029). It is also possible that *alētheia* serves as a reminder that what the Savior declared was “grounded in the truth” of His “revelation of God” (O’Day 1995:771; cf. Barrett 1960:405).

The purpose for the Spirit’s advent was not only to convict the world of its guilt, but also to guide the disciples into comprehending the “depths and heights” of the Father’s “revelation” in the Son (Beasley-Murray 1999:283) and transform every areas of their lives by means of it (cf. Piper 1962:716; Schineller 2000:428; Spicq 1994:80). The Savior wanted to share these eternal verities with His friends, but He knew that what the Holy Spirit would later convey to them would be too much for them to presently bear (v. 12). Jesus might have meant that this knowledge was too difficult for them to understand, or too difficult to emotionally absorb, or perhaps both.

In any case, the Spirit, who is characterized by and conveys “truth” (*alētheia*; v. 13), would help the disciples understand and apply “all the truth” (*alētheia*). The latter denotes the “revelatory sphere of God’s character and ways” (Köstenberger 2004:473), especially as seen in all that the Messiah “concretely and concisely set forth” (Hoskyns 1947:485; cf. Morris 1995:621; Westcott 1981:230). The Evangelist’s main emphasis is on God’s “covenant integrity” (Keener 2003:1038), every aspect of which Jesus’ followers would come to appreciate and heed through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (cf. Beare 1987:118; Kuyper 1964:16). It would be incorrect to conclude that the “message” the Spirit disclosed was in some way “independent” from what Jesus had already revealed (Tenney 1981:158). Instead, the Spirit further unfolded the truth embodied in the divine-human Logos (Bruce 1983:320).

11. The Use of *Alētheia* in John 17:17 and 19

After Jesus delivered His final discourse to His disciples before His arrest, He lifted His eyes toward heaven and prayed aloud to His Father. This is the Savior's longest recorded prayer. In it He prayed for Himself (John 17:1-5), the disciples who were with Him (vv. 6-19), and everyone who would come to believe in Him after His ascension (vv. 20-26). The petition is often referred to as Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. In verse 11, the Son called His Father "holy" (i.e. infinitely upright, absolutely pure, and eternally free from all evil; cf. Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 1 Sam 2:2; Ps 145:17; Isa 6:3; John 17:11; 1 Pet 1:16; Rev 4:8). Then, in verse 17, the Son asked the Father to make the disciples holy.

In particular, the Son asked that the Father use His "truth" (*alētheia*; John 17:17) to separate the disciples from evil, bring them into the "sphere of the sacred" (Lindars 1986:528), and consecrate them for a life of service (cf. Haenchen 1984b:155; Lindsay 1993:142). Brown (1966:761) explains that in this context, "truth" is "both the agency of consecration and the realm into which [believers] are consecrated". The faithful response of the Father in bringing this about would, in turn, engender "steadfast devotion" on the part of Jesus' followers (Kuyper 1964:17). Here the Son declared that what the Father revealed—as recorded in His inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word—is the literal "truth" (*alētheia*; cf. Ps 119:42, 142, 151, 160; Hendriksen 1987, 2:361; Westcott 1981:245). Indeed, Scripture is the standard by which all other claimants to truth are evaluated for their genuineness and veracity.

Moreover, just as the Father had commissioned the Son to perform His earthly ministry, Jesus charged the disciples to herald His message of redemption to the far corners of the earth. This included the assertion that "Jesus is the one in whom God displays the divine glory" (Lincoln 2005:438); but the disciples could not serve the Messiah without first being sanctified in Him (John 17:18). When Jesus said, "I sanctify myself" (v. 19), this was most likely a reference to the cross (cf. Ladd 1997:305). Expressed differently, Jesus was giving Himself as a holy sacrifice for His disciples so that they could be made holy by God's truth (cf. Beasley-Murray 1999:301; Morris 1995:649-650; Woodbridge 2000:828).

In light of this information, it would be incorrect to conclude that Jesus had to make Himself holy; instead, He was affirming His dedication to finish the Father's plan of salvation so that believers could be "truly sanctified", in which "truly" renders the Greek noun *alētheia* and can also mean "genuinely" (cf. Bultmann 1976:511). Another viable option is to translate the verse as "sanctified in truth", where the emphasis is on the eternal verities of Scripture being the means by which God enables believers to grow in holiness. This implies that it is impossible to be "set apart for the Lord's use without learning to think God's thoughts after him". One must also learn to "live in conformity" with the truth God has "graciously given" (Carson 1991:566).

12. The Use of *Alētheia* in John 18:37 and 38

John 13–17 record the farewell meal Jesus ate with His disciples and the speech He made to them. The focus shifts in chapter 18 to His arrest and interrogation before the religious and civil authorities. As Jesus stood before Pilate, the itinerant rabbi from Nazareth claimed to be a heavenly king, not an earthly ruler (v. 36). He also asserted that His goal was to bring "truth" (*alētheia*; v. 37) to the world, not stage a revolt against Rome. The emphasis here is multivalent. On one level, the Son was referring to objective, factual declarations concerning His person, His earthly mission (Morris 1995:681), and the "redemptive faithfulness" of the Father (Kuyper 1964:18). On another level, Jesus' statement did not rule out more general revelation pertaining to the Father and humankind (cf. Carson 1991:595).

Jesus added that everyone who belonged to and loved the "truth" (*alētheia*), heard and heeded His teaching. In brief, the one who stood before Pilate is the meta-narrative of life, whether temporal or eternal in nature (cf. Lioy 2007a:253). Köstenberger (2005:42) explains that the Fourth Gospel deals with two central issues: (1) Jesus' claim to be the Messiah and (2) His assertion "to be one with God". Against this backdrop, "truth" is understood to be an affirmation of these two facts (cf. 20:30-31). The governor, instead of talking further with Jesus, cut off the conversation with a cynical retort, "What is truth?" (*alētheia*; v. 38). Evidently, Pilate had in mind abstract notions and theoretical concepts of a relativistic nature (cf. Bultmann 1976:656; Haenchen 1984b:180; Keener 2003:1113-1114). After his curt response to Jesus, the

governor set in motion the divinely preordained chain of events that led to the Redeemer's crucifixion and resurrection. Morris (1995:682) is close to the mark when he states that "on the cross and at the empty tomb we may learn what God's truth is" (cf. John 19:35; Clancy 2005:107-108; Hoskyns 1947:150-151). Here we discover that "truth as Jesus understood it was a costly affair" (Morris 1995:261).

13. Conclusion

This article has examined the biblical concept of truth in the Fourth Gospel. The essay began by providing a synopsis of the lexical data regarding the concept of truth. This is followed by an examination of the various places in the Gospel of John where the Greek noun *alētheia* (which is rendered "truth") occurs. Based on an analysis of the information, it is clear that the author of the Fourth Gospel affirmed the established notion of truth found in the Old Testament, post-canonical Jewish writings, and Synoptic Gospels. In brief, the prevailing concept is one of veracity and genuineness in stark contrast to all forms of falsehood. Additionally, it is noteworthy that the Evangelist refined this understanding by focusing the notion of truth on the Father's revelation of Himself in His Son. An examination of the data obtained from the Fourth Gospel indicates that the divine-incarnate Messiah is both the epitome and emissary of truth. Furthermore, it is surmised that the Savior's followers come to a full awareness and understanding of the truth by believing in Him for salvation and allowing Him to transform every aspect of their lives.

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