

Watch with Creation at the Cross

Truth Bound in Denial

- ⊕ **Truth created in kindness**
- ☠ **Stubborn denial of Truth**
- ✝ **Truth speaks and fulfills**
- ⊕ **Truth stands forever**

In the Name of God's **Truth**, dear children of heaven:

When Jesus was on trial before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, something came out that betrays the whole human race and our attitude toward truth. To Pilate's questions about what Jesus had done to deserve arrest by His own Jewish people Jesus replied: *"My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."* *"You are a king, then!"* said Pilate. *Jesus answered, "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."* *"What is truth?"* Pilate asked. *With this he went out again to the Jews and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him."* (John 18:36-38 NIV) Pilate knew the truth about Jesus' innocence as his hand washing would show. But he had a serious problem with acting on the truth.

Sound familiar? One of the most famous Western philosophers is Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900), credited with the postmodern relativism that denies any objective truth. At the age of twenty-four he became the youngest person to ever hold the Chair of Classical Philology at the University of Basel. That lasted about eleven years until he resigned in 1879 for health problems. By the age of 45 Nietzsche's insanity was so extreme, he had to live the rest of his life in the care of his mother and sister until his death in 1900.¹ You might say he suffered from **Truth Bound in Denial**. What about us?

⊕ **Truth created in kindness**

All over Europe Nietzsche-types rallied around Charles Darwin and his efforts to elevate human thinking and personal progress over anything of God. Darwin's father was a minister which gave him just enough religion to know what he was denying by evolution. A personal God could not be true, at least not in an enlightened age. Those who consider themselves intellectual today will still give you that condescending pat on the head if you try to share your faith with them. "That's great! That works for you!" they'll smile as they roll their eyes and walk away. Truth is relative to them.

In anticipation of all such denials by His creatures our kind Creator repeated Himself in the opening verses of His eyewitness record of the beginning. Reading through Genesis 1, you would already have heard on the third day how God provided our food chain by creating plants to seed *"according to their various kinds."* (1:11 NIV) Now on Day Five as He fills the seas which He created and the sky above His green earth, God repeats His emphasis quite emphatically for the fail-safe truth of His **Truth** to be clear. To all the fish of the sea and to *"every winged bird"* God gave the blessing to reproduce each *"according to its kind."* (Genesis 1:21 NIV)

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Nietzsche

If evolution were true, the in-between species would outnumber by the billions all the clear “*kinds*” of fish and birds we see today. If evolutionists cared about how God’s **Truth created in kindness**, they would see the dinosaurs here in Genesis 1, among the “*great creatures*” God made to swarm the sea. Some might even figure out one possibility for why they are mostly extinct. In Psalm 74, the Psalmist prays to God: “*It was you who split open the sea by your power; you broke the heads of the monster in the waters.*” ¹⁴ *It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan and gave him as food to the creatures of the desert.*” (Psalm 74:13f NIV) Did God send a meteor shower to give the Leviathan *monsters* or *dragons* a very bad headache, followed by a tidal wave that washed them up into the desert to feed the animals there? We don’t know. But this is sure from God’s Word. He created the huge sea *creatures*. And the Holy Spirit clearly says in many other passages that they were still living when God created man. “Pre-historic” they are not if you accept His story as our kind Creator.

☠ **Stubborn denial of Truth**

Unfortunately, it’s easier to give a **Stubborn denial of Truth** than a humble acceptance of the God who will judge the living and the dead on the Day of His choosing. Even for wise men like King Solomon, son of King David, **Truth** could easily get **Bound up in Denial**. If you were an ancient ruler like the Queen of Sheba, you could ride your camel all the way to Jerusalem to ask Solomon questions about birds and fish and all sorts of plant life. God made Solomon the wisest man who ever lived. He could have told you whether the legends were true about the peacock. Does its flesh really not rot after death? Is it vain that it struts about and shows off its plumage? And what about the mother pelican? Will she actually pluck her own breast in order to feed her young with her blood? Does she die from that?

Solomon could answer both, but he could not seem to answer the desires of his own foolish heart. Although God commanded through Moses that their future king should not (Deuteronomy 17:17), “*King Solomon...loved many foreign women...from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, ‘You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.’ Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love.*” His **Stubborn denial of Truth** totalled wives and concubines: 1000. “*And his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.*” One of the worst idols had human sacrifice of children. Solomon would have fit right in with the abortionists in America today. Just change the name of Moloch to *Convenience*. (1 Kings 11:1-8 NIV)

✝ **Truth speaks and fulfills**

What happened to **Truth** in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve followed their human opinions instead of God’s Word, happened again in the Garden of Gethsemane. And this is extremely strange when you look at the earlier chapters of John’s Gospel to see how **Truth speaks and fulfills**.

Jesus spoke about a sick friend when He told His disciples, “*This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.*” By the time Jesus arrived, Mary and Martha had been grieving for their dear brother Lazarus four days. To comfort Martha Jesus had said, “*Your brother will rise again.*” *Martha answered, ‘I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’* Easily disproved if Jesus is lying. But when He stood by the grave and said, “*Lazarus, come out!*” *The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, ‘Take off the grave clothes and let him go.’* (John 11 NIV)

After such powerful **Truth** the Jewish religious leaders would not dare lay a hand on Jesus, right? They knew He had power to raise the dead. But now they had a bigger problem for their envy. Everyone wanted to see Lazarus too! Solution: Re-kill Lazarus! In fact, they plotted to kill them both.

But Jesus' disciples would be different, wouldn't they? Surely such power would impress Peter to listen when the **Truth** warned him with one of those birds He had created in the beginning. Did Peter accept when Jesus told him, "*Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later*"? No, Peter asked, "*Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.*" Then Jesus answered, "*Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!*" (John 13:36-38 NIV)

How sincerely we sing of our devotion to Jesus our beautiful Savior and to the **Truth** of God that He is. We believe when Jesus says, "*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*" (John 14:6 NIV) But how often do we stand up for Jesus and tell our friends and co-workers Jesus is the **Truth** for their eternal salvation too? We claim we don't know what to say, but why do the words come so easy when we get into an argument about something at home? We can spot non-listeners a mile away when they won't pay attention to what we want to say. But we don't hear ourselves interrupting them especially if what they are saying is admonition from the LORD. "*He who answers before listening – that is his folly and his shame.*" (Proverbs 18:13 NIV) And such is our sin when **Truth speaks and fulfills**. In our life too we tie the knots that keep **Truth Bound in Denial**.

✠ **Truth stands forever**

But it all happened just the way **Truth** said it would. Fish and huge living creatures swarmed the seas and birds filled the sky. They keep on multiplying "*according to their kinds*" because God's **Truth stands**. He stood there in the Garden of Gethsemane and let the soldiers of the Jews bind Him over to trial before two Jewish courts of older high priest Annas and his Roman-popular son-in-law Caiaphas. He was the one who spoke the truth about the **Truth** without even realizing it. Back when they were plotting to kill Jesus and His resurrected friend Lazarus, Caiaphas had scolded the rest of the court: "*You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.*" But the Holy Spirit tells us, "*He did not say this on his own...As high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. So from that day on they plotted to take his life.*" (John 11:49-53 NIV)

Peter proved that the **Truth stands** too when he followed his fellow disciple John into the courtyard of the high priest. Was he strutting like a rooster when he first came in? Were his wings clipped a little when the girl at the door asked him whether he wasn't for sure one of Jesus' disciples. One thing is sure. When his third denial crossed his lips and a real rooster crowed the second time, "*The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: 'Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.'* And he went outside and wept bitterly." (Luke 22:61-62 NIV) Maybe you can see why the rooster has become a Christian symbol for denial, and on the flipside for vigilance. Peter did not, "*Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation.*" (Mark 14:38 TPA) He was more like a weather vane rooster turning whichever way the wind was blowing.

So much to learn when we realize that in our lives too often we have **Truth Bound in Denial**. Lent is a blessed time to come into the light of God's **Truth** and hear our Lord Jesus admonish us with the examples of His disciples, even the lead disciple Peter, of how we fall for the empty philosophies of Pilate and Nietzsche and Darwin without even realizing it. But look again at that pelican which the **Truth** created on Day Five. She may not really kill herself to save her young, but she makes a fine Christian symbol anyway. For our Lord Jesus Christ did shed His blood from His loving heart, broken down under God's wrath because of our foolish refusal to heed God's warnings and our stubborn pride that will not listen. Roosters still are crowing to this day. And each time we hear one, we ought to think of how our loving Lord Jesus reinstated Peter after His resurrection from the dead: "*Feed my lambs....Take care of my sheep.... Feed my sheep.*" And in His mercy He still gives us work to do with His Word of **Truth**. May God set it free in our hearts that never again is **Truth Bound in Denial**. Amen.