

## Why One Way? (Part 3 of 4)

Serendipity Class — April 21, 2002

Study Guide: “*Why One Way?*” by John MacArthur (available at Christian Words & Works)

### Lesson Plan Outline:

- ◆ April 7: Introduction and The Church vs. the World (Chapter 1)
- ◆ April 14: Objectivity (Chapter 2) and Rationality (Chapter 3)
- ◆ April 21: Veracity (Chapter 4) and Authority (Chapter 5)
- ◆ May 5: Incompatibility (Chapter 6) and Integrity (Chapter 7)

### ***Lesson 3: Veracity and Authority***

#### Key Points

- ◆ In the first lesson we saw how the postmodern worldview leads us inevitably down the road to despair — we are forced to conclude that the universe materialized spontaneously from nothing, that no form of life on earth can claim a superior position over another, and that the end of all things is annihilation; there is no intrinsic value or meaning to any life experience
- ◆ Last week we saw how the Bible provides an *objective* standard of truth, and that all truth relies on *rationality*; by contrast, postmodernism denies objective truth, exalts contradiction, and embraces deviance as an expression of individuality
- ◆ *Veracity* can be defined as accuracy or conformity to truth; biblical revelation corresponds to reality at every known point, and has stood firm through more than 20 centuries of scrutiny
- ◆ Competing worldviews invariably collapse when examined carefully or put into practice
- ◆ Biblical truth does not need to be revised or reinvented with changing times; our goal should be to understand how the Bible speaks to our circumstances, rather than trying to “modernize” it according to the times (in reality, nothing has changed in terms of our spiritual poverty; technology just makes things look more sophisticated)
- ◆ In 2 Timothy 2:15 we see the expression “rightly dividing,” which means *cutting it straight* — meaning to interpret parts of Scripture in a manner that is consistent with the meaning of the whole; not doing so can quickly undermine the foundations of one’s faith
- ◆ Faith does not exist apart from truth — genuine faith requires the assent of the mind as well as the submission of the will; faith based on truth is stronger than faith based on feelings
- ◆ Holding back from proclaiming the truth to a lost world is not a virtue of tolerance — rather, it is a sin of unfaithfulness
- ◆ *Authority* is the right to control, command, or determine
- ◆ God is the ultimate authority over the universe; there is no higher authority to whom God must submit (“the buck stops here”); everything else in the universe must submit to God’s authority in all matters (people, animals, matter, energy, etc.)
- ◆ When we faithfully proclaim God’s truth, we speak with the authority of God standing behind us

- ◆ For postmodernism to claim any validity at all, it must first deny the existence of a higher authority (each person must be his/her own final authority) — which means either God does not exist at all, or if He exists, He is an impotent cosmic spectator

### Discussion Questions

- ◆ What happens when we begin to compromise biblical truth for the sake of avoiding confrontation? What happened in Acts 2 when Peter told the Jews how the cow ate the cabbage?
- ◆ Refer to 2 Timothy 3:12-4:5. Why does Paul say we should remain faithful to the gospel even when we are surrounded by evil people?
- ◆ How can disagreements ever be settled when approached from a postmodern worldview? What happens when we try to emphasize commonalities and simply ignore substantial differences?
- ◆ Humans recognize love as one of the strongest of feelings, and yet when the Bible speaks of love, it is often used as a verb, rather than a noun (e.g., *love* God, *love* your neighbor, *love* one another, *love* your wife/husband/children/self, *love* your enemies, do not *love* the world, do not *love* money, etc.). How do we explain the many varied uses of this word? What is lost if we limit the definition of “love” to feelings of affection?

### Take Home

- ◆ Paul said, “Keep a clear mind in every situation. Don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at bringing others to Christ. Complete the ministry God has given you.”

### Supporting Scripture Verses

- ◆ Jude 3 — truth is unchanging — given once for all time
- ◆ Acts 2 — Peter's sermon to the crowd in Jerusalem
- ◆ 2 Timothy 3:12-4:5 — Paul's exhortation for Timothy to be faithful to truth he's been taught
- ◆ Luke 16:17 — every detail of the Law stands, even after heaven and earth have passed away

### References

- ◆ Chuck Colson and Nancy Pearcey — *How Now Shall We Live?*
- ◆ Os Guinness — *Time for Truth*
- ◆ R.C. Sproul — *Lifeviews*