

Aletheia: Truth: Jesus Christ is the Bread of Heaven, John 6:32; the Way, the Truth, & the Life, John 14:6; John's 3 Uses of "We have learned" in 1 John 5:18-20

In Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, he confronts those he has in the past taught the truth and who have responded positively to his teaching of the truth. But when he writes Galatians they have been distracted by false teachers. When a believer is captivated by false teachings he will inevitably reject the teacher of truth. Regarding this phenomenon Paul writes in:

Galatians 4:16 - So then, have I become your enemy by telling you the truth [ἀληθεύω ὑμῖν, *alētheuō humin*]?

The noun form, ἀλήθεια, *alētheia*, is very popular in the New Testament. It is used 109 times, 92 of which are found in the writings of Paul and John. The Hebrew equivalent is the feminine noun אֱמֶת *emeth*, which is usually translated ἀλήθεια in the Septuagint.

Alētheia and *emeth* are translated "truth" in English. Its core meaning refers to an attribute of God which is divine veracity.

The English definitions of veracity are "devotion to the truth," "truthfulness," and "conformity with the truth" (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed.). These, however, apply to human beings.

Alētheia is one of the divine attributes that defines God's character. God does not develop, acquire, or become "truth," He *is* truth. He has always been truth and there never will be a time when He is not truth. The truth of God exists in absolute terms and is therefore reflected in the written canon. Scripture professes the absolute truth of His divine character.

The Scripture speaks of the truthfulness of God and presents it as an absolute.

John 6:31 - "Our [the Galilean crowd] fathers ate the manna in the Jornada, just as it is written, [Psalm 78:24 cf. Exodus 16:4-36] 'He [Moses] gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

John 6:32 - Then Jesus told them, "I tell you the solemn truth [Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, *Amēn amēn legō humin*], it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but My Father is giving you the true [adjective ἀληθινός, *alēthenos*: real as opposed to that which is false] bread from heaven."

Jesus Christ is the true bread from heaven. Manna sustained the Israelites' physical, biological life, but it is Christ who is the bread that provides eternal life. He conveys this idea later on when He says to Thomas in:

John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, "I am the way [ὁδός, *hodos*: a highway; a response to Thomas's statement, "How do we know the way?" (v. 5)], and the truth [ἀλήθεια, *alētheia*: the Gospel is not a lie], and the life [ζωή, *zōē*: eternal life and the spiritual life of the believer]; no one [οὐδεὶς, *oudeis*: nobody but those excepted] comes to the Father but [εἰ μὴ, *ei mē*: except] through Me."

John reiterates the Lord's claim of being the only means by which one may be saved in 1 John 5:20, a verse that not only concludes his first Epistle but also expresses the truth of who and what Jesus Christ is and relates it to historical reality.

1 John 5:20 - [NASB] And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

1. In 1 John 5:18 we find the first in a series of “we know” proclamations that conclude John’s first Epistle. This introductory phrase is a single word in the Greek: **οἶδαμεν, oidamen**. It is the perfect active indicative of the verb:

ὁράω, horaō: “to perceive mentally, intellectually, and spiritually,” therefore, “we have learned.”

present: Perfective; refers to a fact which has come to be in the past, but is emphasized as a present reality.

active: The believer’s positive volition, while functioning inside the divine power system, produces the action of a sinless *modus vivendi*.

indicative: Declarative; denotes the believer’s understanding that the spiritual life of the Church Age is a place of perfect refuge from the sin and evil common to the devil’s world.

2. The concept in verse 18 is stated in the following corrected translation:

1 John 5:18 - We have learned [**Οἶδαμεν, Oidamen**] the present reality that any believer who has been born from God does not sin [**this status refers to status-quo spirituality: while filled with the Holy Spirit the believer does not sin; to do so he must make a volitional decision to reject the spiritual life in favor of sinful temptation**], but God protects him who was born from God, and the evil one does not touch him.

3. The second thing “we have learned” is found in verse 19 where the believer’s volition has perceived the particulars of the Invisible War:

1 John 5:19 - We have learned [**Οἶδαμεν, Oidamen**] that we are from God [**citizens of a heavenly community and isolated from the world inside the divine power system**], and the entire world’s cosmic systems lie under the control of the evil one.

4. The final of the three “we have learned” statements is the one we want to stress. It, too, begins with the present active indicative of the verb, **οἶδα, oida**:

present: Perfective; a fact that has come to be in the past but is emphasized as a present reality: we have learned that the Son of God has come.

active: The positive believer produces the action of having learned this reality.

indicative: Declarative; for the reality of having come to understand the doctrines of Christology: the first advent, the virgin birth, the incarnation, the hypostatic union, the prototype divine power system, the sacrificial spiritual death, the resurrection.

5. What we know is introduced by the declarative conjunction: **ὅτι, hoti**, translated “that.” It is followed by the title of Jesus Christ that emphasizes His deity: **υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, huios tou theou**: “the Son of God.”

6. This title is proclaimed by the Father at the Lord's baptism: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (Matthew 3:17), again by the Father at the time of Christ's transfiguration: "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased" (Matthew 17:5b), and which Peter recalls in 1 Peter 1:17b.
7. When Gabriel was informing Mary that she would become pregnant he informed her that "the holy Child shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35c).
8. After Paul regained his sight following the Damascus Road conversion, he began to preach in Damascus where he proclaimed Jesus "is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20b). Paul also uses the title in Romans 1:4; 2 Corinthians 1:19; Galatians 2:20; and Ephesians 4:13.
9. The title speaks of the eternal relationship the Lord has with the Father, which relationship He perfectly revealed to the world during the Incarnation.
1 John 5:20 - We have learned that the Son of God has come ...
10. The verb "has come" is the present active indicative of ἦκω, *hēkō*:
present: Perfective; denotes a fact that has come to be in the past, but is emphasized as a present reality.
active: Jesus Christ produced the action by entering human history through the incarnation.
indicative: Declarative: a statement of historical fact.