

Be a Berean!

The Bereans...received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day. (Acts 17:11)
["Be a Berean" will regularly cover topics that arise during Lockport Alliance Bible classes. Contact Franklyn Pfeil—liftedup@lockportalliance.org—with questions or comments.]

"with or without me"

Soon, Shelley and I will be off to Terry's Corners Fire Hall, where we vote. When they were still too young to read the names on the ballot, Frankie (with me) then Eddy (with Shelley) loved to go into the booth and pull the big lever, closing the curtain behind us with a clang! Then, we'd point to one little lever after another, and a little finger would push the levers down. Best of all, they got to pull the big lever back the other way, which made the curtain fly open and return all the little levers to "neutral," ready for the next voter. It was, and is, a very big deal.

That little booth is a monument to American political freedom, a secular 'holy of holies,' infusing us with a small surge of power. For a moment, what each of us thinks actually counts, and carries influence. But the influence ends here, in the transient now, with choices concerning assessor or councilman or senator or president.

Moreover, a problem can arise if the voting experience lends little Frankies and big Franklyns the mistaken notion that issues beyond the political process--issues of essential truth--are contingent upon our approval, and await our say-so.

Cultural commentators classify our era as a time of transition, from "modernism" to "postmodernism." Modernism decrees that truth is not an absolute--that each individual defines his own truth (1).

Postmodernism goes a step further into the darkness, and decrees that there is no truth to define.

But the Bible teaches that His Truth is marching on, inexorably *accomplishing the purpose for which God has sent it.* (2)

My friend Mason leads a mountain expedition every autumn in New Hampshire. When one of the men was injured on the ascent, it reminded Mason of our relationship to God's Truth: "The mountain is what it is (3). We accommodate to the mountain; it doesn't accommodate to us. We either tread carefully--or we fall."

A couple times every year, I fish the maw of the Niagara River, underneath the Peace Bridge where Lake Erie enters. The powerful currents pile against the massive bridge supports and turn my boat in slow, centripetal circles. I will not allow my boys to fish with me there, because the river doesn't care.

The mountain and the river, like gravity, are *no respecters of persons* (4). In like manner, the Word of God doesn't care what I think of it. It is not subject to my approval or disapproval. Indeed, I am in subjection--to its force and dominion, and to its King.

Inside the Old Testament Holy of Holies--the innermost room of the Temple--was a little trunk, the size of a manger, called the Ark of the Covenant. Within the ark were only three items--the tablets of the law, a pot of manna from the Wilderness, and Aaron's rod, which had blossomed.

On the stone tablets were written the Ten Commandments: the first tablet with four commandments concerning our relationship to God; the second tablet with six commandments concerning our relationship to man. The Commandments signify the life of Jesus Christ, who lived in complete fulfillment of God's law.

The jar of manna (daily bread) signified Christ's death, when the Bread of Life was broken for us.

Aaron's rod--a dead walking stick--had miraculously budded, signifying Jesus' resurrection.

Pontius Pilate, a Roman political hack and a complex Bible character, asked Jesus, "*What is truth?*" (5) Jesus did not reply. Then, acceding to the howling mob--which had been whipped to a blind frenzy by the murderous envy and political machinations of the Pharisees--he handed Jesus over to be crucified. As he did, he washed his hands--as if by the gesture of hand washing he could vote to abstain from his complicity in Christ's death. And the Truth trudged on to Golgotha.

If you haven't, go to the cross. There's the glimpse of the Truth that we're given. There's the real Holy of Holies, Ground Zero of the universe.

While you're there, register a decision, if you will.

But tread lightly, *for you are on holy ground* (6). And know that whatever we decide about Jesus, whether we take Him or leave Him, we don't pass sentence on the Truth. Already complicit, we pass sentence only on ourselves: *He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life* (7).

And His Truth marches on, with or without me.

Scripture cited: (1) cf. Judges 17:6 (2) Isaiah 55:11 (3) cf. Exodus 3:14 (4) see Acts 10:34 (5) John 18:38 (6) cf. Exodus 3:5 (7) 1 John 5:12

It is our fervent hope that you will 'be a Berean' by attending one of these Bible-based classes this week! —
"Cross Ties"--Sunday at 9:45