

The purpose of this publication is to spread the truth, to sow God's good seed, the Word of God, and to confront religious error for the good of men's souls. Editor: Allen Dvorak

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it fits our own viewpoint to some degree. Or perhaps we consider (legitimately or illegitimately) the source of the news story to be reliable. The same predilection exists with regard to religious teaching. People assume the truthfulness of certain sources (the local preacher, pastor or church creed). "If my pastor says so, it must be true." It is easy to identify these folks because, when their religious practices are questioned, they turn to one of the aforementioned sources for validation, rather than the infallible source of truth, God's word.

Other people search to find the "truth" (some "version" of truth) that fits the lifestyle they want to live. These folks sometimes jump from church to church until they find one that teaches a version of "truth" that suits them, rather than comparing the teaching of each church with the true standard of religious truth, God's word.

When I read secular news stories, I am increasingly "on the lookout" for "fake news." I have to fight the tendency to believe

something simply because it has been posted or broadcast by some major news network (after all, they can't post it on the Internet if it isn't true, right?!). News reports that conflict with my perception of reality can be easily dismissed while I readily accept those news reports that tend to support my line of thinking.

More importantly, I need to "fact-check" the religious teaching that I hear or read. I need to make sure that I am not believing something to be true simply because I like the consequences for my life. I don't need to be too quick to believe; I need to confirm that this is what the word of God actually teaches. On the other side of the coin, it is so easy to reject truth that doesn't fit my deep-seated beliefs!

The Bereans were "fact-checkers" (Acts 17:11). We need to follow their example.

Bible Challenge Question - Answer

Luke named three women "who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities": Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna, along with "many others, who provided for them out of their means" (8:2-3). Mary Magdalene is identified by Luke as one from whom Jesus had cast seven demons. Joanna is identified as the wife of the man who was Herod Antipas' household manager; she is also listed among the women who reported the resurrection of Jesus to the apostles (Luke 24:10). What Jesus had done for her (evil spirit or infirmity?) is not mentioned.



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Fake News

By Allen Dvorak

When Jesus was presented as an evildoer to Pilate by the Jews, Pilate interrogated Jesus, asking Him, "Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" (John 18:35). From Jesus' response, Pilate concluded that He was claiming to be a king. When the governor specifically asked Jesus, "So you are a king?," Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world - to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice" (John 18:37; ESV). Pilate concluded this conversation with a question, "What is truth?"

Many have wondered what Pilate meant. Since we can't determine verbal inflection from the Scriptures or know the nonverbal cues that would have perhaps answered the question of Pilate's intent, it is impossible to identify Pilate's attitude/meaning with certainty. However, from what we know about Pilate from secular sources and the fact that

he didn't pursue the conversation further, I suspect that he was expressing either sarcasm or pessimism. "Is it possible for anyone to know the truth?" Perhaps he was expressing the view that truth is subjective, i.e., depends upon the individual. We will never know for certain what he meant.

Nevertheless, he asked the burning question of our day. "What is truth?" In the chaotic landscape of recent politics, the charge has been made by "both sides of the aisle" that opponents were using "fake news" to manipulate the thinking of the voting public. "Fake news" are news stories that have been totally invented, with the objective of providing support for some political agenda. The mainstream media have reacted with hypocritical dismay and outrage; I say "hypocritical" because "fake news" is no new phenomenon; the major news outlets have long used this tactic of "fake news" to influence readers. At least one local television news station has taken advantage

Does God Exist?

By Allen Dvorak



Text: _____

Does God exist?

_____!

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

_____!

1. _____

_____!

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

The end of the matter; all has been heard. _____ and keep his _____, for this is the whole _____ of man.

-- Ecclesiastes _____; ESV

“Strength and growth come only through continuous effort and struggle.”

-- Napoleon Hill

“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.”

-- Mac Anderson

of the recent focus on the use of fake news by declaring that it will emphasize true journalism (objective and factual reporting of the news) in the coming year. We will see.

The administrators of Facebook have recently announced that they will “crack down” on fake news posted...by using liberal fact-checkers (like Snopes) to distinguish between fake news and genuine news stories. That, of course, is the problem with fake news – it can be extremely difficult for the average individual to fact-check a news story. As a result, writers (loosely known as “journalists”) sometimes twist the facts a bit to create the desired conclusion or impression or even to sell products and services. I know that I have, on occasion, been deceived by such stories in the past and I wonder how many *other* times I have accepted things that simply were not true – “made up” by unscrupulous “journalists,” but never realized it.

“Fake news” or the peddling of untruths is not peculiar to politics. It is extremely common in religious circles as well. What makes something untrue is that it doesn’t harmonize with reality or some standard of truth.

Actually, Jesus had answered Pilate’s question before he even asked it! Jesus said that He came into the world “to bear witness to the truth” (John 18:37). If Pilate had really wanted to know what truth is, its source was standing right in front of him and he could have inquired!

The difficulty we have in identifying “fake news” from news media, particularly that which addresses complex issues or events that are not local, is that we usually don’t have access to an unquestionable source of truth.

In the matter of religious truth, we have such a standard. In the prayer of Jesus on the night of His betrayal, He indicated that the word of God is truth (John 17:17). Whatever is “posted” (published or preached) can be compared with the Scriptures and a determination can be made if the “news” is true or false.

Sounds simple? Actually, it is. But another problem with secular “fake news” is that often we are quite willing to believe the news story without “fact-checking” because

Bible Challenge Question

Luke mentioned three women who gave financial support to Jesus and the apostles. Who were those women?

The answer to this question is on the back page.