**A Fact-Checker from God**

Based on [John 8:31-36](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Jn8.31-36)

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Reformation Day (Observed)

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Again, I decided to watch the 2020 US presidential debate...I’m a glutton for punishment I guess. But seriously this final one was better than the first in terms of civility and order. There were less interruptions. Ironically...the clarity only made me more confused. It made sense to be confused when there were interruptions and insults. But now both men have a chance to speak clearly. Why am I still confused if ?

What I realized was that these men were often debating different sets of facts. They quote numbers for how many have died of COVID, how many new jobs were created, who said what and when, whether and why children are detained at the border. Since the last election, news outlets hire “fact checkers” to check to see if things stated are true. Now there are those who fact-check the fact-checkers. It is amazing that, with all the science and data and analysis and statistics we have today, there is no settled set of facts from which to *debate*. *That in fact*, the facts have become differences of opinion.

Speaking of debates, today we observe the Reformation, fittingly on the day when Martin Luther nailed the 95 Theses for *debate* on the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. What prompted a German monk to such boldness, to dare to challenge the authority of the Pope and Church hierarchy of the day? /// It’s that, some years earlier, this monk for the first time was able to access and read the Bible. And more than that, he knew what access to that Bible meant. This was a source of real facts. It was an infallible source of information. It did not need to be fact-checked...it is the fact-checker...the measuring stick, the Word of God...straight from his mouth and His Spirit.

I had a similar experience when I was first in university...the first time I realized that I had access to an indisputable fact. The fact that the truth exists, that it is knowable and provable.

As a young adult, loved to discuss philosophy and bigger questions of life. I would freely give my thoughts and opinions on such things. Everytime someone would push back and challenge what I was saying, I’d simply say, “Well, that’s just my opinion, you don’t have to believe it”. And with those words, I was safe. I didn’t have to defend what I said any further. “That might not be true for you,” I’d say, “but it’s true for me.” That all went fine until I was in class with a particular professor who wouldn’t let me off so easily. “So Nathan you’re saying that your opinion can’t be argued to be true or false because there is no truth? Is that true?” I had to dial back a bit and say, “Okay, maybe there is truth, but nobody can know it for sure. My professor said...do you know that for sure? I said okay, I know that what I know is true, but the truth can never be proven. Oh so your saying the truth can never be proven...prove it.

That professor of mine embarrassed me terribly in front of a class of students...and it was single the most helpful thing anyone has ever done for me...because it gave me a way to test the knowledge of others. Every single person in the world--who would deny that there is truth, or that anyone could know something for certain--every single such person was without a doubt wrong in a way that could be demonstrated is a few seconds of cross examination.

I had been taught my whole life that I was entitled to my opinions, but the facts were for scientists and professionals to disclose. They were the proverbial Wizard of Oz. I didn’t know what made them tick, but I knew they had authority and I had to listen to them. And I fearfully did what they said until, in a matter of a few seconds, toto ran up and pulled the curtain to show that the venerable Wizard of Oz was really just a weak old man pulling at levers. All of a sudden, I didn’t have to listen to whatever the scientists and professionals...the “priests” of knowledge told me anymore. I had a way to test their “facts.”

The reformation was the time that truly deserves to be called “The Enlightenment.” David sings to the Lord, “Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” What made a german monk so bold as to test the “facts” handed down by popes and cardinals, these self-proclaimed “priests of knowledge”. They preached the so-called “facts” like, if you buy this piece of paper, the pope promises to release your dead relatives soul from purgatory. You see without the Bible...there’s no way for a german monk or peasant, to fact-check the pope. But with the bible, a german peasant can test even the angels. So too, what Jesus says to the Jews who had believed in him, he said to Martin Luther and to you and me “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

In having access to the word of God, you have access to the truth that sets you free from the ignorance of men. It doesn’t tell you everything, whether fossil fuels are causing climate change or whether a COVID vaccine is near or far off. But it does tell you the central facts of life upon which your attitude can be firmly and rightly based. God created this world and only he can end it. He is carefully guiding and guarding all things in his time in which a thousand years is as a day. He has already sent his son to make perfect atonement for your sins, so that, if you are willing to accept it, you may live and die with a clean conscience.

And he will send his son again to come and judge the living and the dead. The survival of the world does not hinge upon the next presidential election, or upon our response to COVID and hanging on the numbers. Climate change may be happening, but the failure to regulate fossil fuels, I can assure you, will not cause the apocalypse. COVID-19 may take your life, but it cannot take your soul. Fear God, believe His Word as fact, Love your neighbor as yourself. I can’t assure you of the effectiveness of masks or social distancing, but I can assure you of the effectiveness of faith grounded upon God’s word. Christ has set you free from the darkness of this age and brought you into the freedom of his marvelous light. Walk in the light of his truth.