

# THE TRUTHFULNESS OF GOD

## TRUTH HAS FALLEN ON HARD TIMES

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- We are living in days when the truth is no longer tolerated or welcomed

**2 Timothy 3:1-8** ~ But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. 6 For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, 7 **always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.** 8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so **these men also oppose the truth,** men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith.

- Postmodernism claims that truth is subjective, promoting tolerance and ruling out any source of objective truth
- It is based on the fundamental contempt for all truth claims, preferring rather the “fuzzy logic” of ideas told in “story” form
- Postmodernists are generally suspicious of all rational claims and are averse to truth that is expressed in plain propositional terms
- As such, they don’t embrace the clarity and inflexibility required to deal with truth in propositional form
- “[The] attack on propositional expressions of truth is the natural and necessary outworking of postmodernism's general distrust of logic, distaste for certainty, and dislike for clarity. To maintain the ambiguity and pliability of ‘truth’ necessary for the postmodern perspective, clear and definitive propositions must be discounted as a means of expressing truth. Propositions force us to face facts and either affirm or deny them, and that kind of clarity simply does not play well in a postmodern culture.”<sup>1</sup>
- In the postmodern mindset, truth is stripped of its propositional content
- Postmodern thought was adopted in the 1950s in the architectural world as a reaction against the modernist thought
- This mindset quickly found its way into the art and literary world in the 1970s
- By the 1980s and 1990s, this same mentality crept into the church, resulting in post-modern Christianity where there was a strong reaction against “cold, hard facts” in favor of a “warm, fuzzy subjectivity”
- It embraces experience over reason and subjectivity over objectivity and, as a result, truth becomes relative
- Such a shift lessens the standard that the Bible contains objective absolute truth and even disqualifies biblical truth as being absolute in many cases
- This results when personal experience is allowed to define and interpret what truth actually is
- Sadly, our culture has moved past postmodernism into being a post-truth culture
- In 2016, the Oxford Dictionaries word of the year was “post-truth,” because that’s when the word began showing up in multiple articles about political movements in the US and Europe
- The official definition reads: “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief”
- This is different and more problematic than postmodernism because, where a postmodern person might say, “There is no objective truth,” a post-truth person might think “there is objective truth, but I don’t care because my personal feelings and preferences matter more.”
- Anyone who brings facts that challenge those feelings or preferences is labeled as a “hater” or “intolerant”

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gty.org/library/articles/A292/the-logic-of-postmodernism>

- “The problem of a post-truth age is that there is not just one problem. A post-truth culture feeds on the denial of truth. Our culture cannot answer the simple question, ‘What is a woman?’ Our churches cannot answer the simple question, ‘What is a pastor?’ Our political leaders cannot answer the simple question, ‘What is a baby?’ As the darkness continues to build, there are enemies of truth who are preparing to attack the foundations of our civilization with more bombshell issues that will further divide and threaten our way of life.”<sup>2</sup>
- “One astute philosopher has said that we are raising a generation of ‘moral stutterers.’ Others call it ‘moral illiteracy.’ Yet another observer says, ‘There is a hole in our moral ozone.’ This has produced an imploding world in which abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia, pornography, transgender identity, and all manner of lewd behavior are practiced and approved of. Thus abandonment of moral values can be traced back to the rejection of the truth. When absolute truth departs, everything is up for grabs. Tragically, modern man now has his feet firmly planted in midair.”<sup>3</sup>
- None of this should surprise us because, from the beginning, Satan has questioned truth, evidenced in his questioning the validity and authority of God’s Word
- “Nowhere does the Christian religion come into sharper conflict with the modern world than in its insistence that truth exists and may be known.”<sup>4</sup>
- This truth, which comes from God, is the ground of our faith, the comfort to our souls, and the rock of our confidence

## THE DEFINITION OF GOD’S TRUTHFULNESS

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- In an age when truth is often seen as entirely subjective, the Bible’s presentation of a God whose truthfulness is absolute and objective stands in stark contrast
- Truth is rooted in the nature of God since all truth finds its source in God
- God’s truthfulness means that he is the true God and that all his knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth...he is the truth, knows the truth, and speaks only the truth

**Exodus 34:6** ~ Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;

**Psalms 108:4** ~ For Your lovingkindness is great above the heavens, And Your truth reaches to the skies.

**Psalms 138:2** ~ I will bow down toward Your holy temple And give thanks to Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word according to all Your name.

**Isaiah 65:16** ~ Because he who is blessed in the earth Will be blessed by the God of truth; And he who swears in the earth Will swear by the God of truth; Because the former troubles are forgotten, And because they are hidden from My sight!

**Romans 3:4** ~ May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, “THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED.”

**John 1:14** ~ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**John 14:6** ~ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.”

**John 14:17** ~ that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

<sup>2</sup> <https://g3min.org/christianity-in-a-post-truth-world/>

<sup>3</sup> Steve Lawson, *The Moment of Truth*, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Terry Johnson, *The Excellencies of God*, 61.

**1 Thessalonians 1:9** ~ For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,

- “Truth is singular, absolute, and universal. It is an aspect of God’s essential nature. Truth is eternal and unchanging. It is unalterable and perfect.”<sup>5</sup>

## God is the Only True God

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- The truthfulness of God is primarily evident in the fact that he alone is genuinely God and there are none like him
- God is absolutely reliable and the ultimate reality...the only real God, in contrast to false gods
- He alone is authentically God...he alone in his being, attributes, and activities conforms to all that God ought to be...thus, he is true metaphysically
- He is not like the false gods, which are vanities and lies...rather, he is what God should be
- “While many peoples have worshipped one thing or another as God, none of these things matches the genuine concept of deity. On the other hand, the God of Scripture is the real thing. He is everything a God should be; he fully matches the ideal.”<sup>6</sup>

**2 Chronicles 15:3** ~ For many days Israel was without the true God and without a teaching priest and without law.

**Isaiah 44:8-10** ~ Do not tremble and do not be afraid; Have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, Or is there any other Rock? I know of none. 9 Those who fashion a graven image are all of them futile, and their precious things are of no profit; even their own witnesses fail to see or know, so that they will be put to shame. 10 Who has fashioned a god or cast an idol to no profit?

**Isaiah 44:16-19** ~ Half of it he burns in the fire; over this half he eats meat as he roasts a roast and is satisfied. He also warms himself and says, “Aha! I am warm, I have seen the fire.” 17 But the rest of it he makes into a god, his graven image. He falls down before it and worships; he also prays to it and says, “Deliver me, for you are my god.” 18 They do not know, nor do they understand, for He has smeared over their eyes so that they cannot see and their hearts so that they cannot comprehend. 19 No one recalls, nor is there knowledge or understanding to say, “I have burned half of it in the fire and also have baked bread over its coals. I roast meat and eat it. Then I make the rest of it into an abomination, I fall down before a block of wood!”

**Isaiah 45:5** ~ I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God.

**Jeremiah 10:10** ~ But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King.

**John 1:9** ~ There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

**John 14:6** ~ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

**John 17:3** ~ This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

**Romans 3:4** ~ May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, “THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED.”

**1 Thessalonians 1:9** ~ For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,

**1 John 5:20** ~ 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.

- The truthfulness of God means that God is a being who is infinitely perfect in power, in wisdom, in goodness, in lordship over time and space, etc.
- But whose idea of God is this? What idea of God must he conform to in order to be the true God?

<sup>5</sup> Johnson, *Excellencies of God*, 62.

<sup>6</sup> John Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 372.

- Although reasoning becomes circular at this point, it is not our idea of what God should be like in order to be the true God...it is God's idea of what the true God should be like
- In other words, God is the true God because in his being and character he perfectly conforms to his own idea of what the true God should be
- “The God of the Bible is not the product of the religious imagination of an ancient nomadic people. He is not the end result of thousands of years of religious evolution, from animism to polytheism to monotheism to Jesus. The God of the Bible is not a projection of the religious aspirations of people yesterday and today, who is admirable but fanciful. He is not the opiate of the people, as Karl Marx (1818-1883) imagined, of practical value perhaps but without any actual existence. He is real and true. He is not fictitious or imaginary. He is reality – more real than we are – and the source of all that is real.”<sup>7</sup>

### IMPLICATIONS

- We must identify idols in our life
- We must worship Him alone

### God Cannot Lie and His Word is True

- God is truth because he always tells the truth...he is never mistaken about what the truth is
- He always knows what is true in his omniscience...and always speaks what is true...whatever God says matches the way things are
- He never lies or shades the truth...he represents things as they really are...he never deceives

**Numbers 23:19** ~ God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?

**1 Samuel 15:29** ~ Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind.

**Titus 1:2** ~ in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,

**Hebrews 6:18** ~ in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us.

- All three members of the Godhead speak the truth

God – **John 3:33** ~ He who has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true.

Christ – **Matthew 22:16** ~ And they sent their disciples to Him, along with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any.

Holy Spirit – **John 5:32** ~ There is another who testifies of Me, and I know that the testimony which He gives about Me is true.

- This doesn't mean that God tells us all the truth he knows (he doesn't)...or that is obligated to do so (he isn't)
- It does mean that God's Word is always true...and therefore it is completely reliable and trustworthy
- His revelation of himself is perfectly reliable...because his word, in all its forms, is true
- God has spoken “in many portions and in many ways” (Heb 1:1-2) and, as a result, all that he has revealed must be true and reliable

**2 Samuel 7:28** ~ Now, O Lord GOD, You are God, and Your words are truth, and You have promised this good thing to Your servant.

<sup>7</sup> Johnson, *Excellencies of God*, 66.

**Psalm 19:9** ~ The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.

**Psalm 119:86** ~ All Your commandments are faithful; They have persecuted me with a lie; help me!

**Psalm 119:142** ~ Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth.

**Psalm 119:151** ~ You are near, O LORD, And all Your commandments are truth.

**Psalm 119:160** ~ The sum of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.

**John 17:17** ~ Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

**Ephesians 1:13** ~ In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

- Thus, there is such a thing as an objective moral standard of right and wrong...and God's laws correspond to that objective standard...truth makes exclusive claims about reality
- Truth establishes a firm boundary between right and wrong, factual and fabricated...it presents specific propositions and claims
- This objective standard ultimately expresses and is rooted in God's own moral perfection
- "The truth of God is a great pillar for our faith. Were not he a God of truth, how could we believe in him? Our faith were fancy; but he is truth itself, and not a word which he has spoken shall fall to the ground."<sup>8</sup>
- The fact that God has spoken truth in sacred Scripture stands the wisdom of this world on its head...because only it is utterly reliable and dependable
- Just as God is immutable, so is truth...there is no such thing as new truth...what is true today will remain true tomorrow, regardless of how our culture seeks to personalize truth
- God's objective, propositional truth transcends societies, cultures, centuries, and continents...it does not change to accommodate one's worldview, surroundings, or social norms
- "Like death, truth is not relative, individual, subjective, or personal. A person is either dead or alive. People cannot be partially dead and partially alive. There is finality to death and finality to truth, whatever an individual's personal view might be. We know enough not to speak of our own 'personal view of gravity,' our 'personal view of aerodynamics,' or our 'own opinion about arithmetic.' The true and the real in the physical realm are mirrored by the true and the real in the moral, religious, and spiritual realm as well."<sup>9</sup>

### IMPLICATIONS

- We must not lie
- We must believe God's Word to be true and put our complete faith and trust in it
- We must read, study, love, treasure, and obey God's Word
  - "If God has spoken, everything changes. Who in his right mind would say, 'I know what God *says*, but I know better'? What sane person would say, 'I know what God *declares*, but I believe otherwise'? Who with a modicum of sense would say, 'I know what God *commands*, but I will do something else'? Or, 'I know what He *requires*, but I'm going to ignore it'? No reasonable person thinks or talks like that."<sup>10</sup>
- Churches must be unashamedly marked by an unrelenting fidelity and commitment to the truth, where the preaching, teaching, leading, and shepherding are anchored deeply into the Scriptures so that as the winds of culture fiercely blow, the church will remain fixed without shifting and moving away from the truth

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Watson

<sup>9</sup> Johnson, *Excellencies of God*, 61.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 74.

- We must boldly proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ as it is the only means by which sinners will be truly set free (John 8:32 ~ the truth will make you free)

## God Does What is True

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- Not only has God given moral rules that conform to objective moral law, but God's actions correspond to the moral law that he has revealed
- His works are true and real

**Deuteronomy 32:4** ~ The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.

**Psalms 111:7-8** ~ The works of His hands are truth and justice; All His precepts are sure. 8 They are upheld forever and ever; They are performed in truth and uprightness.

**Daniel 4:37** ~ Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

**Zechariah 8:8** ~ and I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness.'

**Revelation 15:3** ~ And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!

**Revelation 16:7** ~ And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."

**Revelation 19:2** ~ HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS

- God's works are true and reveal truth

**Psalms 19:1** ~ The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.

**Romans 1:19-20** ~ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

- "His work of creation resulted in a real world, not a mirage or a dream. Likewise, His works of providence are real. His governances and interventions are real, not imaginary. His judgments are true judgments, not false. His deliverances are true deliverances, not partial or incomplete. His miracles are true miracles, not hoaxes. His mercies are true mercies, and His comforts are true comforts, not imagined or self-serving. His moral law is true morality, not arbitrary or temporary."<sup>11</sup>
- In other words, God does not trick us with senses that misperceive the nature of reality; rather, what we see, hear, and touch can generally be trusted to be true
- This is in contrast to the devil whose works are all lies and deceptions...he misleads

**John 8:44** ~ You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

**2 Corinthians 11:13-15** ~ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 66.

- Satan offers an alternate universe, one which is a counterfeit reality...he even produces a false church
- No wonder the Bible speaks of the “deceitfulness of sin” (Heb 3:13).
- No wonder the Bible describes the human heart as “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it? (Jer 17:9)
- No wonder the Bible details the “lusts of deceit” (Eph 4:22)
- This is why we should never “trust/follow our heart” but should rather “lean not on our own understanding”
- “Sin misrepresents reality, persuading its victims that to indulge in vice is no big deal and that there will be no consequences. Sin seems to offer unparalleled excitement and reward, convinces people that it may safely be indulged, and that indeed it would be foolish to miss out on the occasion...Our emotions persuade us that sin’s ‘passing pleasures’ are harmless, when in fact they will destroy us in the end (Heb 11:25). We construct false narratives leading to false realities that are unrealities.”<sup>12</sup>
- “The world is a real place that reveals real truth about the true God. The devil, the flesh, and the world – the trinity of evil – offer not what is real, but an enticing mirage, a destructive fantasy, a seductive imaginary world, a counterfeit heaven that, in fact, is hell. Their alternative universe is a world that does not exist. The true and real is found in God and in the world as God made it and governs it.”<sup>13</sup>

### IMPLICATIONS

- We must fight the deceptiveness of sin, mortifying it at the root
- We must recognize that our emotions are often not trustworthy
- We must affirm that our culture is remarkably confused about the most elementary aspects of truth and affirm that rejecting God’s truth in his works always results in tragic consequences
  - Transgenderism, plural pronouns, birthing persons, etc. – “Among the central features of worldly wisdom today is the notion of the psychologized self. The real me, the person who I am, is a purely psychological phenomena about which the body has no particular input. I am what I think myself to be regardless of what the chromosomes in every cell of my body indicate and regardless of what my sexual organs happen to be...The self is seen as sovereign and must be free to define its own identity. There can be no restraints on that right to define oneself. If organs must be amputated, if plastic surgery must be performed, if hormones must be injected into the body, so be it. Physical reality may be rejected because the internal sense of self is a greater reality.”<sup>14</sup>
  - Homosexuality – “We see the same philosophy at work in the rapid acceptance of and normalization of homosexuality and gay marriage. What the sovereign self wants is not to be denied, whatever the biological or physiological design. If an erotic relationship is desires with a member of one’s own sex, a relationship of sodomy and oral sex, so be it.”<sup>15</sup>
  - Race – “If bathroom choices may be made on the basis of gender self-identification (as is being advocated), why not allow racial classification to be made on the basis of self-identification? Perception, apparently, is reality even when disconnected from physical reality.”
  - “Truth is, we cannot redefine ourselves in harmony with our subjective and idiosyncratic perceptions. This is merely to construct a false reality that is hostile to the truth of God as revealed in the nature of things. Today’s experimentation is a result of an assault on reality, which is to say, a result of the suppression of clear truth revealed in God’s works. The consequences are harmful, real suffering resulting for real people living in the real world. Biblical theology and anthropology remain ever relevant today.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 73.

## God is Faithful

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- Because God is the standard of truthfulness, he is completely dependable, reliable, and trustworthy
- He is the God of *hesed*...loyal love...free from all falsehood
- He is faithful to his promises and, when we need him in time of troubles, he is there

**Deuteronomy 7:9** ~ Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments.

**Psalms 33:4** ~ For the word of the LORD is upright, And all His work is done in faithfulness.

**Psalms 36:5** ~ Your lovingkindness, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

**Psalms 40:10-11** ~ I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have spoken of Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great congregation. 11 You, O LORD, will not withhold Your compassion from me; Your lovingkindness and Your truth will continually preserve me.

**Psalms 89:1, 2, 5, 8, 33** ~ I will sing of the lovingkindness of the LORD forever; To all generations I will make known Your faithfulness with my mouth...2 For I have said, "Lovingkindness will be built up forever; In the heavens You will establish Your faithfulness"...5 The heavens will praise Your wonders, O LORD; Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the holy ones...8 O LORD God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You...33 "But I will not break off My lovingkindness from him, Nor deal falsely in My faithfulness.

**Lamentations 3:22-23** ~ The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. 22 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

**1 Corinthians 1:9** ~ God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**1 Corinthians 10:13** ~ No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

**2 Timothy 2:13** ~ If we are faithless, He remains faithful...

**Hebrews 10:23** ~ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

**1 John 1:9** ~ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- While we can't see the future and what we will face in this life, we can look back and see God's faithfulness in every situation
- We can see his hand upon us, where he has been a dependable help, guardian, and friend along the way
- He has never let us down, never lied to us, and has always done what is in our best interests even when it was hard to understand what he was doing or how it could work out for good
- "Though we sometimes fail to meet our obligations and are not always dependable, what a comfort and encouragement to know that the God with all the power to meet our needs cares about us and is dependable at all times!"<sup>17</sup>

### IMPLICATIONS

- We must believe that God is a rock of refuge and find our help in him
- We must believe that he keeps his promises to us
- We must believe that all that he has guaranteed us in salvation will come to pass

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<sup>17</sup> Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 374.