The Pilgrim’s Progress

Chapter 17: Ignorance and Little-Faith, Part 1
Christian and Hopeful found their way to Immanuel’s Land where they were refreshed and restored after their terrible encounter with Giant Despair in Doubting Castle. The four Shepherds – Knowledge, Experience, Watchful, and Sincere – took care of them and showed them many useful things that would serve them well for the rest of their journey.
Just before Christian and Hopeful left, the Shepherds gave them a map, encouraged and warned them, and wished them God’s blessing.

A little below the mountains, from which they had descended, was the country of Conceit. A crooked lane came from Conceit and merged with the Way. Here they met an energetic young man named Ignorance.
The Country of Conceit

• When we see or hear the word *conceit* (a noun), our minds may well think of the adjectival form, *conceited*. To be conceited means “having an overweening (arrogant) opinion of oneself, or one's own qualities; vain” (OED).

• In his *Analogy of Religion*, Bishop Joseph Butler (1692-1752) wrote that a man was “highly conceited in his superior knowledge.”
The Country of Conceit

• John Bunyan uses the noun form as a metaphor for a country. We discover his intended meaning in the context of the dialogue between Christian and Ignorance.

• We detect Ignorance’s primary religious philosophy when he says, “You follow the religion of your country and I will follow mine. I hope it will work out for all of us.”
The Country of Conceit

• What Ignorance means is that he, along with the people of the country of Conceit, prefers his own personal opinion and judgment of eternal matters over absolute, propositional truth.

• Out of Conceit “came a crooked lane which merged into the way on which the pilgrims walked.” Ignorance did not come in at the Wicket-gate.
Oswald Chambers

“The greatest curse in spiritual life is conceit.”
Os Guinness

“The reverse side of calling is the temptation of conceit.”
Ignorance Reveals His Worldview

• “I was born in Conceit and am going to the Celestial City.”
• “I know my Lord’s will and have lived a good life.”
• “I repay every man I owe, pray, fast, tithe, and give other offerings.”
• “I have left my country for the place I am going.”
• “No one knows the way to the Celestial Gate.”
Critique

• “I know my Lord’s will and have lived a good life.” How does one know God’s will apart from special revelation? How does Ignorance know that living a good life is the ground of his own justification before God?

• Why do all of Ignorance’s sentences begin with “I”? 

• If “no one knows the way to the Celestial City,” how does he know the way?
“We are living in a time when sensitivities are at the surface, often vented with cutting words. Philosophically, you can believe anything, so long as you do not claim that it is a ‘better’ way. Religiously, you can hold to anything, so long as you do not bring Jesus Christ into it.”

Ravi Zacharias
1946-
Christian Exclusivism Defined

- Belief that Jesus Christ is the *only* Savior (denies that there are or can be other saviors).
- Belief that explicit faith in Jesus Christ is necessary for salvation (denies that people may be saved without conscious and explicit faith in Jesus Christ).
Exclusivism in the N.T.

• “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him” (John 3:16-17).

• “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me’” (John 14:6).
Exclusivism in the N.T.

- “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).
- “And they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household’” (Acts 16:31).
- “Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24).
Exclusivism in the N.T.

• “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time” (I Tim. 2:5-6).

• “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5).
Exclusivism in the N.T.

• “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19).

• “And Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’” (Acts 2:38).
If Christian exclusivism is true, then all the following alternatives are false:

- Atheism
- Universalism
- Non-Christian Religions
- Pluralism
- Inclusivism
• **The Law of Non-contradiction**: “A (something that exists) cannot be both B and non-B at the same time in the same sense.”

• **The Law of the Excluded Middle**: “Either A (some proposition) is true or A is false.”
First Principles in Action

• The claim is made: “Truth does not exist.”

• Suppose this view (that truth does not exist) is true (if it is, it is self-defeating).

• If all views of reality are false, then this view must also be false.

• To deny the existence of truth is to affirm its existence.

• Truth is inescapable.
“Are philosophical and religious ideas matters of *taste* or matters of *truth*? The simplest way to answer this question is to let those who believe that truth is a matter of taste decide for themselves. Let’s say that we are having a discussion with some people who believe that all philosophical and religious statements are merely a matter of taste. If this is the case, they
should not defend themselves when we disagree. If they begin to defend their view that these statements are matters of taste (or even think their statements are true), the truth is revealed. Why should they get upset if we prefer one view to another as a matter of taste?”
What is Truth?

• Philosophers use this phrase to think about truth: the correspondence theory of truth.
• The correspondence theory of truth means there is a unified truth that corresponds to reality.
• Facts involve properties; reality is the totality of facts.
• What we believe are the rails upon which our lives run.
What is Truth?

• When we believe something, we act and test its reliability.

• When our beliefs match up to the facts, we have truth.

• Facts are totally unforgiving. Facts are what we run into when we are wrong.

• If you are building a life, the truth will not show up immediately. We will find our beliefs either true or false.
“Truth is a property of propositions. To say that \( x \) is a property of something is to mean that \( x \) is a characteristic, feature, or trait of that thing. Just as baldness is a property of some men and redness a property of some roses, so truth is a property of some propositions” (Ronald Nash).
The Law of Identity

“Everything is what it is, and not another thing.”

Joseph Butler