

## Arriving at Reliable Knowledge: How Research Justice Falls Short of Christian Experience I John 4:13-16a

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Certainty: Absolute Truths that Produce Joyful Assurance / Love; Certainty; Truth

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One of the earliest threats to early Christianity was Gnosticism. This teaching featured the “need for additional knowledge” or to “be in the know” in order to communicate with or know God. The teachings included: “men of God” who were uniquely gifted with knowledge that others did not have - including visions or revelations from the Holy Spirit; a view of the material world as evil; and a view of the makeup of man as three parts (spirit, soul, body). This should lead to obvious questions for us today, “How do we know what we know?” or “How are we sure that what we know is absolutely true?” and “Do we have all that we need to know today?”

If you were speaking to Dr. Harari (professor at Oxford), he would tell you that human knowledge evolved and went through what he calls the “Cognitive Revolution.” Specifically, he calls it the “Tree of Knowledge” mutation.

The appearance of new ways of thinking and communicating, between 70,000 and 30,000 years ago, constitutes the Cognitive Revolution. What caused it? We’re not sure. The most commonly believed theory argues that accidental genetic mutations changed the inner wiring of the brains of Sapiens, enabling them to think in unprecedented ways and to communicate using an altogether new type of language. We might call it the Tree of Knowledge mutation.... Yet the truly unique feature of our language is not its ability to transmit information about men and lions. Rather, it’s the ability to transmit information about things that do not exist at all. [Harari, Yuval Noah. *Sapiens (A Brief History)* (p. 21-24). Harper. Kindle Edition.]

According to Dr. Harari, we know what we know through human evolution, and this is by chance.

If we were speaking to certain individuals from within our culture, they would want you to believe in *Research Justice* — a type of experience-based knowledge.

**Epistemic or Research Justice** — “By this, it means that we should include the lived experiences, emotions, and cultural traditions of minority groups, consider them ‘knowledges,’ and privilege them over reason and evidence-based knowledge, which is unfairly dominant” [Pluckrose & Lindsay, p. 187]

What both of these ideologies miss is objective truth. Within biblical Christianity, experience is tethered to absolute truth; and we can be sure of this truth. In much the same way as a tethered hot air balloon, if objective truth is the ground and experience in God’s Spirit is the Balloon, then **biblical Christianity is experience that is tethered to truth!** It is easy for Christians today to live based on their emotions or their experiences, but do we really need to live that way?

› We must be sure we know the love of God and that we can rely upon it!

**1 John 4:16a KJV 1900**

<sup>16</sup> And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

This verse answers the question, “How do I know the love of God, and why can I rely upon it?”

## (1) Because of the real gift of the Holy Spirit

### ([1 John 4:13](#))

**1 John 4:13 KJV 1900**

<sup>13</sup> Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

The gift of the Spirit implies certain truths:

- God kept his promise to the apostles.

**John 14:26 KJV 1900**

<sup>26</sup> But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

**John 15:26 KJV 1900**

<sup>26</sup> But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

- The apostolic eyewitness testimony in the New Testament scriptures is foundational to knowing and relying upon the love of God.

**Ephesians 2:19–20 KJV 1900**

<sup>19</sup> Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; <sup>20</sup> And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*;

- There is an experience to the Christian life, one which strengthens/emboldens the inner man.

**Ephesians 3:16 KJV 1900**

<sup>16</sup> That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

**Kid's Pause:** God's Word is the Record of the eyewitnesses of Jesus' life, and God's Holy Spirit is the real Person given to all who receive Jesus as Lord. God's Word and God's Holy Spirit go together.

God can always be trusted to keep his word. You are not speaking on behalf of the Holy Spirit if what you are believing/saying is **against** the truth of God's Word. Believing and living the Christian life is not something you do on your own. Even though *Research Justice* would say that knowledge comes from the experience of the marginalized and though the *Cognitive Revolution* would teach us that what we know is a matter of chance development, **the scriptures are actually the source of Absolute Truth, and the Spirit of God is God's gift** to us so that we might know the absolute truth of God's Love.

“How do I know the love of God, and why can I rely upon it?”

(2) Because of the Spirit-empowered confession about Jesus [as the Savior of the world]

([1 John 4:14-15](#))

**1 John 4:14-15 KJV 1900**

<sup>14</sup> And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world. <sup>15</sup> Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

First, there is the **content of confession**.

- *the Father sent* confirms the economic subordination within the Godhead.

There is nothing wrong with being told what to do. One of the beautiful ways that Christians manifest Jesus Christ is through submission.

- *the Son* — the passage is Trinitarian.

In addition, Jesus' Sonship is unique and a material incarnation. Again, we know what we know and that we can rely upon it because Jesus actually came to this world in bodily form. We know God's love through the incarnation of Jesus.

- *to be the Savior of the world*. By implication, the world needs saving, and Jesus came to save or to deliver ([John 4:42](#)).
  - Confirms the Sovereign care of God for his creatures.
  - Reminds us of the sacrifice of Jesus as our substitute.
  - Possibly has reflections of the various saviors from the OT. (Joseph was sent by his father, David was sent by his father...etc.).

It is this message that the Holy Spirit indwells/empowers people to proclaim.

- Second, there is the matter of confession. The **act of confession** is evidence of possession by the Holy spirit. This is consistent with other NT passages such as [Romans 10:9-13](#).

**Kid's Pause:** How do you know when a child has gotten into chocolate? There is clear evidence. How do you know when someone has really believed in Jesus as Savior? There is clear evidence in what they confess about Jesus.

When you genuinely believe that Jesus is the Savior, you will show evidence of this belief in what you say about Jesus. "How do I know the love of God, and why can I rely upon it?" Because of the Holy Spirit and his work through me to openly confess Jesus as Savior.

Absolute knowledge does not begin with research justice, nor does it begin with a study of a theory of evolution. Absolute knowledge is based on absolute truth. Absolute truth does not eliminate experience. Christian experience comes by way of the Holy Ghost who is given to us, and this Christian experience is connected to the absolute truth of Jesus Christ in His word.

- › Research Justice falls short of Christian experience because Christian experience is connected to ABSOLUTE Truth.

Test your feelings by the testimony of God's Word. God has proven his love in Jesus Christ. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ today! Parents, in all of your instruction to your children, make the absolute truths of Jesus paramount. Students, test the truth claims made in culture by the truth claims made in scripture and trust God's Spirit to strengthen you.

Pray and ask the Lord to help you be more faithful to the preserved Word of God. Ask God to make you more aware of his very Spirit within you.