

John 8:45

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

Analysis

And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Jesus identifies the tragic irony at the heart of unbelief—His opponents reject Him precisely because He speaks *alētheia* (ἀλήθεια), truth. The causal conjunction "because" (ὅτι/hotī) indicates their unbelief stems from, not despite, His truthfulness. This paradox reveals the depth of human depravity: fallen humanity prefers lies to truth when truth threatens self-righteousness.

The present tense "I tell" (λέγω/legō) emphasizes Jesus's continual, ongoing proclamation of truth—not one statement but His entire ministry. "The truth" carries the definite article in Greek (τὴν ἀλήθειαν), indicating not merely factual accuracy but ultimate reality, divine revelation, truth embodied (cf. John 14:6, "I am the truth").

"Ye believe me not" (οὐ πιστεύετε μοι/ou pisteuete moi) uses the present tense, indicating habitual, continual refusal to believe. This contrasts with verse 30 where "many believed on him." The rejection is willful, persistent, rooted in spiritual deadness (v.47). As Calvin observed, "The cause of unbelief is not in the word, nor in Christ, but in men."

Historical Context

This confrontation occurs in the temple treasury (v.20) during the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus has just declared His divine origin ("I am from above," v.23) and warned His opponents they would die in their sins (v.24). The religious leaders'

rejection despite mounting evidence—healing the blind, raising the dead, fulfilling prophecy—demonstrates the hardening that Isaiah 6:9-10 predicted, which Jesus referenced in John 12:39-41.

First-century Judaism prided itself on preserving divine truth through Torah. The Pharisees saw themselves as truth's guardians. Yet when Truth Incarnate stood before them, they rejected Him—fulfilling the pattern of Israel rejecting the prophets. Their problem wasn't intellectual but moral and spiritual: they loved darkness rather than light (3:19).

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Why do people often reject truth that threatens their self-image or requires repentance?
2. How can we examine ourselves to ensure we're not rejecting biblical truth that challenges our preferences?
3. What does this verse teach about the relationship between spiritual condition and receptivity to God's truth?

Interlinear Text

ἐγὼ	δε	ὅτι	τὴν	ἀλήθειαν	λέγω	οὐ	πιστεύετε	μοι
I	And	because	G3588	you the truth	tell	not	ye believe	me
G1473	G1161	G3754		G225	G3004	G3756	G4100	G3427

Additional Cross-References

John 18:37 (Truth): Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause

came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

John 7:7 (Parallel theme): The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

Galatians 4:16 (Truth): Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

2 Thessalonians 2:10 (Truth): And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

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