

PERCEPTION

Perception has to do with awareness of something through the senses (such as through sight, hearing, etc.). Perception may not be reality, or the truth, but is understood to be so because of feedback or response from our senses. Perception is different from deception: to deceive or be deceived is to mislead with falsehoods, or to be mislead; perceive is to understand from the senses with or without the presence of deceit.

If you perceive something to be true, you have determined or believe it to be true; in actuality or reality, it may not be true or in complete correspondence to your senses; in other words, your physical senses may not be giving you an accurate understanding or conclusion. Your ability to perceive accurately may depend on more than your physical senses; but, to perceive the truth of the Bible relies on more than physical senses – it relies on the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life.

When Jesus was questioned by Pilate before the crucifixion, Pilate responded with the question (whether sincere or not), “**What is truth?**” Jesus did not respond, according to the account in John, but did previously describe himself as *the way, the truth, and the light*. **Jesus came to testify to the truth.** What then is the truth? What appeared to be (the truth) in the understanding of many at that time was not indeed the truth. Jesus was the messiah – of which the prophesy occurred in the Old Testament; but few believed at that time for reasons described in both the Old and New Testament.

“You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them”

- Acts 28:26-27

Preceding this scripture in Acts, Luke tells us, “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers...”; by the spirit, we understand spiritual things, and the truth regarding he who is the truth and who came to testify to the truth.

More than the physical senses, our ability to perceive the truth depends on our heart: a calloused or *hard-heart* describes an unwillingness to consider the possibility that what was known or understood is not completely true. To question the possibility that our understanding is not accurate and, even worse, that others have misled us, can sometimes be difficult if not impossible. Yet, we are strengthened and enabled to understand or perceive the truth when God, through the Spirit, indwells our hearts and softens us for such a time as this.

In a **WORD**