

Romans 2:7-8 in the Navajo Bible

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Áko hada'jólnúigo yá'át'éhígi ádajoonííngíí bee aa ha'niih áádóó íł ídlí índa iiná doo ninít'i'ii t'áá hazááká bíká ádajit'ínígíí éí hool'áágóó jiináa doogo Diyin God haididoo'áál. ⁸ Nidi diné t'áá shí t'éi daznizinii áádóó t'áá aaníinii doo bik'eh dahojít'íinii, nidi doo t'áá ákogi ádaat'éii bik'eh dahojít'ínígíí éí Diyin God hach'í' hashké dínóodzizíggo t'óó báhádzidgo atíhoolííł. (Romans 2:7-8)¹

To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. ⁸ But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. (Romans 2:8)²

Introduction

In English it sounds like rejecting the truth is something intellectual. You think a different way and that means you've rejected the truth. But in Navajo, *t'áá aaníinii doo bik'eh dahojít'íinii*, sounds like something more practical. You live a different way and that means you reject the truth. Thinking. Living. There's a difference.

What Is the Truth?

When Jesus speaks, what He says is of course true and so we could say that Jesus' words are the truth. But in John 14 He doesn't say it this way. There Jesus doesn't say that He speaks the truth, although He does do that; instead He says He *is* the truth.

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)

Notice also that right after saying this He goes adds, "No one comes to the Father except through me." That sounds involving. When we come or go somewhere we can't just think about it and be there. It would be nice if we could! But we can't. So we take a bus, or drive a car, or walk. In any case, going from one place to another is an active experience, not a wish.

¹ Navajo Bible quotations are from *Diyin God Bizaad. The Holy Bible in Navajo*. Revised edition. New York: American Bible Society, 2000.

² English Bible quotations are from *The Holy Bible: New International Version*®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.

Who Is the Truth?

The truth about God involves believing certain things, but it is not limited to a set of beliefs. In the fullest sense, the truth about God is not a thought, but a Person. John the Baptist gave the best answer when he said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29; see also vs. 36). He didn't say let me explain this to you, and he didn't say that Jesus would explain anything (although it's true that He did explain many things); instead he said, Look! There He is. There is God's explanation to mankind. It is not that Jesus gives us the explanation. He *is* the explanation.

Just the fact that He's here at all is both a complete explanation and a complete mystery. Everything about Jesus should be impossible, but there He is. How can someone who has no beginning (see Micah 5:2)³ be born a human baby at a moment in time? How can someone who knows all things "learn obedience from what he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8)?

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴² "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" "The son of David," they replied. ⁴³ He said to them, "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he says, ⁴⁴ "The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet." ⁴⁵ If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?" ⁴⁶ No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions. (Matt 21:41-45)

In a sense no one can understand Christ, and yet we can only know who we are by knowing who He is.

Conclusion

Knowing Christ is not a good work that earns salvation, but it is an intensely involving experience. It touches every aspect of our lives. If we are Christians and there are still corners of our lives that the Holy Spirit has not been able to touch, then we aren't Christians after all. We must belong to Christ completely, or we do not belong to Him at all. The truth about God is the whole truth, and it is nothing but the truth.

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (John 17:3)

I like the way Romans 2:8 comes across in Navajo. I think the Navajo translation of this verse captures an important concept extremely well and that it both feeds into and is consistent with the above concept of what it means to know God.

³ Hebrew *ûmôšā'ôṭāyŵ miqqêdem mîmê 'ôlām*, at the end of this verse, means literally, "and His goings forth [are] from before [the] days of eternity." Eternity had a beginning, but the Son did not. He became the Son of man by reason of human birth, but did not become the Son of God. He was always that – from before (*miqqêdem*) the days of eternity.