



# The Voice of Truth



December 27, 2009

## God Never Promised

By Jimmy Pettigrew

*"Seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust" (2 Peter 1:3-4).*

God's promises are great and precious. They have been made possible because of God's glory and virtue. Peter stresses that these precious promises enable one to become a partaker of the divine nature. God promised the Messiah (**Genesis 3:15**), and in the "fulness of time" (**Galatians 4:4**) sent His Son. God promised the Kingdom of Christ would never be destroyed (**Daniel 2:44**). The Lord will come again (**Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**); He promised the resurrection (**1 Corinthians 15:22; John 4:28-29**); the judgment (**Romans 2:5-6; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27**); Hell for the wicked (**Matthew 25:46; Romans 2:8-9; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9**); salvation for the baptized believer (**Mark 16:16**); spiritual blessings in Christ (**Ephesians 1:3**); salvation to the obedient (**Hebrews 5:8-9**); the crown of life to the faithful (**Revelation 2:10; 2 Timothy 4:8**), and even material blessings to those who put God and His Kingdom first (**Matthew 6:33**).

God has never promised that the Lord will return to the earth. The Bible teaches we shall meet the Lord in the air (**1 Thessalonians 4:17**); this earth shall be burned up (**2 Peter 3:7-10**). God has never promised that the Lord will establish a kingdom when He comes. The Bible teaches that the Lord's kingdom was established upon Pentecost of **Acts 2**; that the Lord is now reigning over His

kingdom. God has never promised to save everybody. The Bible teaches that provisions have been made for all men (**John 3:16**); That God wants all men to be saved (**2 Peter 3:9**); that the Savior's invitation must be extended to all men (**Matthew 11:28**). Specific conditions must be met! God never promised to save those who would not obey Him. The Bible teaches saving faith is an obedient faith (**Romans 1:5; James 2:14ff**); He is the author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him (**Hebrews 5:9**); Vengeance will be taken upon those who obey not (**2 Thessalonians 1:8**). God has never promised to save those outside the church. The Bible teaches the saved are added to the church (**Acts 2:47**); The Lord is the Savior of the body (**Ephesians 5:23**), and that the body is the church (**Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18**). God never promised to save those who refuse to be baptized. The Bible teaches that baptism is essential to salvation (**Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 2:20-21**); Baptism puts one into Christ (**Galatians 3:27**); every spiritual blessing is "in Christ" (**Ephesians 1:3**).

Let us be exceedingly careful not to base our hopes upon things assumed! ♦

## Never Compromise!

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Is it right for a member of the church to attend the regular meetings of the denominational church that their spouse, brother, sister, etc., is a member of? We must not let our human feelings or thoughts be our guide to answer this question. None of us are wise enough to answer this question without going to the Bible (**Jer.10:23; Isa. 55:8-9**). God's Word is the only place to find the answer. Our attitude must be one of accepting what God says in His Word, even if it means

we must give up our own ideas.

The Bible is clear concerning those with whom we may not have fellowship: the Christian who does not walk after the apostolic traditions (**2 Thess. 3:6**); the Christian who causes division (**Rom. 16:17**); the bad, evil, corrupt Christian (**1 Cor. 5**). We may not have fellowship with unbelievers (**2 Cor. 6:14-17**), or any unfruitful works of darkness (**Eph. 5:11**).

God has always required His people to be separate (**Lev. 20:24-26**). God expected His people to be separated from the religious practices of other nations. He told them not to intermarry, realizing that to intermarry with idolaters would be to take the chance of being led away from the one true God unto false worship. (Solomon is a good example). This is one of many reasons why a Christian should marry a Christian. If it could happen to them, would it not be possible for it to happen to us?

God wanted His people separate, to have no part with idol worship; idol worship would be a false worship and false doctrine. But wouldn't that be true of any other false religious belief or system? Denominationalism is a false religious system. A religious denomination comes into existence only when a group originates by the preaching, believing, and obedience of some doctrine other than the true gospel of Christ. It teaches and practices error. What is said in the Bible concerning idolatry, and the fact that God's people should have no part in it, must also be said of denominationalism. Paul said, "*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple,*" (**Rom. 16:17-18**). They cannot be a part of our fellowship (**2 Jno. 9-11**).

However, there are some who will say, "If you attend our meeting, we will attend yours." The Bible says, "*standfast in the*

*faith ...be strong,*" (**1 Cor. 16:13**); "*be strong in the Lord...*," (**Eph. 6:10**); "*earnestly contend for the faith...*" (**Jude 3**). You simply cannot compromise and contend at the same time. In every case when the Bible talks about false religious systems, the Christian responsibility is to *have no fellowship* with it, to *earnestly contend for the faith* and *reprove the false religion*. If someone attends our meeting and obeys the gospel, what has happened? Was it because you compromised and attended with them so that they would attend with you? **NO!** It was God's power, His Word, the gospel that converted the soul (**Psa. 19:17; Rom. 1:16-17; Jas. 1:21**). Never compromise; always be faithful to Christ. ♦

## Twisted Scripture

By Jeff S. Smith

The apostle Paul told his readers in Ephesus that when they read his letters, they would be able to understand his insight into the mystery of Christ (**Ephesians 3:4**).

He was not, then, writing to obscure or obfuscate, but only to communicate. His objective was perspicacity, not perplexity.

When Peter commented upon his spiritual brother's writings, however, he noted that they were often misinterpreted or abused (**2 Peter 3:14-16**).

Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

People of ignorance and instability are the ones most prone to twisting scripture—altering its meaning and application in ways that either bind or loose where God has not.

Even inspired apostles were told, *“Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven”* (**Matthew 18:18, NASB**).

Scripture was God-breathed into the hearts and mouths of inspired people who preserved it in their writings (see **2 Timothy 3:16**). *“No prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit”* (**2 Peter 1:20-21**).

Because of the divine origin and eternal power of God’s word, it is imperative that people who labor in it do so with caution and respect. James is surely concerned with twisted scripture when he warns, *“Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness”* (**James 3:1**). Likewise, Peter says, *“If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God”* (**1 Peter 4:11, NKJV**).

Scripture is twisted, however, when the one working with it is either ignorantly unskilled or maliciously duplicitous. Some twist the scripture because they do not know any better; their ignorance, while not entirely forgivable, is at least correctible (see **Acts 18:24-26**).

Others do violence to the faith on purpose, choosing to misinterpret God’s word because it is easier that way. They find themselves kicking against the goads of a wounded conscience, but they resist those pangs of guilt and convince themselves that it is all right.

Some twist the scriptures because of personal bias or loyalty, maybe to a sect or even to self. An honest interpretation would invalidate some choice and make for inconvenient changes and so the honest assessment is suppressed.

Others twist the scriptures because of

greed. They desire interpretations that will feed the treasury or ensure a paycheck. Peter likened them to the false prophets of old—like the men in Jeremiah’s time who promised peace, peace, when there was no peace on the horizon (**2 Peter 2:1-3**).

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

Teachers twist scripture to prove pet doctrines and to win debates, snatching statements out of context and making inconsistent applications of certain truths. They are like the devil when he tempted Jesus, using Scripture against itself and making a mockery of the simplicity and clarity of God’s word (see **Matthew 4:1-11**).

Scripture is twisted both to bind and loose. The Pharisees, of course, interpreted many parts of the Law of Moses in excessively severe ways so that they bound where God had not. They considered themselves the essence of conservatism, but it is also liberalism that goes beyond God’s word to bind where he has not (see **2 John 7-11**). The early church used the issue of ritual circumcision to resolve this problem, but even at Rome, the same principles were in play where the Jewish saints sought to bind their diet and calendar upon Gentile converts to Jesus (see **Acts 15, Romans 14**).

Scripture is twisted to loose where God has not loosed when authority is discovered in divine silence for myriad missions and customs. God’s New Testament marriage law is judged to be too strict on its own and so modern men loosen it with a dozen different theories. The pattern of work and worship for the church excludes so many popular and prominent activities; couldn’t it be

loosened just a bit? A pattern once loosened can never be restored again, save with great discomfort and regret.

When offered a morsel of twisted scripture, the disciple must simply stay hungry for truth—the milk and meat of God's word that is pure and peaceable—and not settle for a pretzel of error and deceit.

Credit: [www.moodychurchofchrist.com](http://www.moodychurchofchrist.com) ♦

## **"The Extent Of God's Authority"** By Jarrod Jacobs

When we consider God's authority, many will pay lip-service to it, but few seem to realize just how far God's authority extends. We live in a time when men wish to have some authority "for themselves." They want to be able to "call the shots" and run their own lives. This is just not possible. The sooner we recognize the extent of God's authority over us, the better off we will be. Consider the points below and let us humble ourselves before God Almighty. What is the extent of God's authority over man?

**1) He Directs Us - Jeremiah 10:23:** "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." If it is not in man to direct his steps, who will direct us? The Lord God!

**2) He Has Told Us How To Worship Him - John 4:24:** "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Therefore, our worship is not a "do as you please" kind of thing. Nor is our worship geared toward what makes people feel good, but what pleases God!

Our worship to God consists of singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16); prayers, teaching, partaking of the Lord's Supper, and giving of our means (Acts 2:42, 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2).

Why? Because this is what God has told us to do!

**3) He Has Told Us To Be Morally Pure - I Timothy 5:22:** "...keep thyself pure." The NAS says, "keep yourself free from sin." **Ephesians 4:25-5:4** list several things in which the Christian is not to engage: lying, sinning in anger, stealing, gossiping, acting like the world, telling "dirty" jokes, cursing, etc., ought not be a part of a Christian's life. Why? Because God rules. He has the authority over us and expects us to be better than that!

**4) Whatever We Do And Say Must Have Sanction From God - Colossians 3:17:** "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

### **Conclusion**

In truth, when we consider these passages of Scripture, we find that there is NO part of our life over which God does not have authority. God rules completely, and it is high time we respected this. God "sees in secret" (Matt. 6:4, 6, 18). He knows our thoughts, words, and deeds. And, He will judge our thoughts, words, and deeds one day by His Son (Jn. 5:22, 27; II Cor. 5:10). Therefore, why fight against God? Let us surrender our lives and wills to the Almighty! Let us now determine that we will submit to God's rule. If not, there will be a day in which we will kneel, and confess, and acknowledge God's power over the universe, but then it will be too late (Rom. 14:11-12; Phil. 2:10-11; II Cor. 5:10). Don't wait until it is too late! Live a worthwhile and fulfilled life by submitting wholeheartedly to the authority of God which encompasses us and all aspects of our lives! Credit: [www.southside-churchofchrist.com](http://www.southside-churchofchrist.com) ♦

### **About the Hillcrest church of Christ**

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#### **Schedule of Assembly**

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am  
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am  
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm\*

\*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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