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24) Those whom God saves have been called by the gospel (Rom. 8:30; II Thess. 2:14).

25) Finally, the Bible says that God wants all men to be saved (I Tim. 2:4).

After reading these 25 things that the Bible says saves us, how could anyone *dare* say that one thing "alone" saves us? Where is the passage that says anything "alone" does anything? Some may balk and say that we are "mixing categories." That is to say, there are things that God does to bring about salvation, and then things man must do. No one denies this. I believe and teach that there are things God does in order to bring about man's salvation. For man to try to "do it on his own," would result in nothing but dying in his sins. Dear reader, just go back through the things we have listed, take a sheet of paper, draw a line dividing the sheet in two, and on one side of the line write at the top of the page, "What God does." Then, on the other side of the line write, "What man does." Go back through your Bible and write down what God has done to bring about salvation for man and then what man

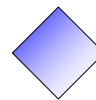
must do in response. I can assure you that you will not have a "lop-sided" list; nor will there be many things which God does, and only one thing that man does for salvation!

In fact, if we can look into the Bible and find anything besides faith that man must do in order to be saved (ex. repent, confess Christ, etc.), then man isn't saved by faith "alone" is he? Friend, we are not denying the importance of faith in Christ in any way. It is absolutely necessary, for without it, we will die in our sins (Jn. 8:24; Heb. 11:6). However, we must not get caught up in the false teaching that says that faith "alone" will save us, and we have nothing to do after that!

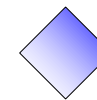
The salvation of man's eternal soul is the most important thing in this world (Matt. 16:26). Jesus came to die for us and save us (I Tim. 1:15). God has given us His word (II Tim. 3:16-17). Now, it is up to us to read, study, and obey this precious word (Eph. 3:4; II Tim. 2:15; Jas. 1:22-25; Matt. 7:21-23). When we do all he said to do, we are unprofitable servants (Lk. 17:10). Yet, for all of this, God loves us and has provided a plan we can follow and upon doing such, can be saved. Are *you* saved from your sins? Credit: www.southside-churchofchrist.com ♦

THINK ABOUT IT!

When a farmer stops plowing his land, stops planting seed, and stops harvesting his crops, he has stopped doing those things that identify him as being a farmer. When a Christian stops attending worship services regularly, stops studying, stops giving as he has been prospered, and has stopped working for the Lord, he has stopped being a Christian because he has stopped doing those things that identify him as a Christian. "By their fruits ye shall know them," (Matthew 7:20). ♦



The Voice of Truth



December 12, 2010

The Only Sure Way!
By Jimmy Pettigrew

The most sole facet of Christianity is its all-sufficiency in things pertaining to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). The cause of our Lord does not need gimmicks, entertainment, family life centers, gyms, or any projects of men in order to attract the people. The gospel of Jesus Christ can stand on its own merits as the one and only message of redemption. Gimmicks have no power to make men faithful to Christ. God's Word has the power, His only power to save men from sin and place their feet on the way of holiness (Romans 1:16). People listen, the gospel has not lost its power! When people were attracted to Christianity and the church in the first century, they were drawn to Jesus by means of His doctrine! The Holy Scriptures truly supply us with the complete revelation of all that mankind needs for time and eternity (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Sergius Paulus was interested in hearing the truth. When he responded, he responded to the word of God, not to the "warmth" that flowed from Paul or Barnabas or the assurance that his "felt needs" would be met. The text says he believed because he was "astonished at the doctrine of the Lord" (Acts 13:12).

The system of faith, once delivered (Jude 3), shall never be broken (John 10:35). God's word is enduring (1 Peter 1:25; Matthew 24:35), "is quick and powerful" (Hebrews 4:12). The power of the word of God is compared to the crushing impact of a hammer which breaks a rock into pieces (Jeremiah 23:29). "Buy the truth, and sell it not ..." (Proverbs 23:23). The truth is the only means of salvation (1 Timothy 2:4). It is the only deliverance from sin (John 8:32), the only principle of holiness (John 17:17), and the one thing needful (Luke 10:42). There is only one thing which will build up the saints of God and that is the "most holy faith" (Jude 20). It is exceedingly clear, as one reads the New Testament, that God's power (1 Corinthians 1:18) does not rely upon gimmicks of men. James says, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). We are made clean by His word (John 15:3; 1 Peter 1:22), not

"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;"

2 Peter 1:3 (American Standard Version, 1901)

by our wisdom! People, when we think the plan of God, the One who rules in the kingdoms of men (Daniel 4:25), needs help from our schemes and gimmicks we are sadly mistaken (Acts 7:48-50). Man cannot direct his steps (Jeremiah 10:23); his heart is not a dependable guide (Proverbs 28:26); his way may be in error (Proverbs 14:12); man's thoughts are not God's thoughts or God's ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). God's word is active and working, powerful enough to do what it is designed to do (Isaiah 55:11).

Listen, the very nature of God's word is such that it will do its job in the one who hears it. It gives men the "power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12). The word of God is a lamp to guide us (Psalms 119:105); to make us free (John 8:32); make us wise and complete (2 Timothy 3:15-16). It is the standard in which all men will be judged by in the last day (John 12:48). So, we must all abide in the teaching of it (2 John 9-11); preach and teach only that which is in the Bible (Galatians 1:6-9); do not add to or take away from it (Revelation 22:18-19); speak as the oracle (words) of God only (1 Peter 4:11). "For do I now persuade men or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10). Only those who do God's will will be saved (Matthew 7:21-23). God's written word is the only sure way (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

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About the Hillcrest church of Christ		
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www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com		

"That's Your Interpretation"

By Mark Larson

That's just your interpretation! How many times has someone said that to you when you attempted to teach them the truth from the Scriptures? Rather than take the message of truth to heart, it is quickly dismissed as merely your opinion and not taken seriously at all.

If you have ever heard this before, you know that it is sort of like "hitting a brick wall." Further discussion of the truth with such a person can be very difficult. The potential for meaningful Bible study is not very promising.

What Is Your Interpretation?

The best way to begin in your response to someone who says: "That's just your interpretation" is to hand the passage over to them and ask for their interpretation. An interpretation in Bible study is simply an explanation of the meaning of a particular passage of Scripture. Rather than be discouraged and give up, make this offer instead: "I am willing to hear your interpretation and correct my own position if I am wrong. What is it?" This demonstrates fairness as well as humility, both which are necessary for Bible study (**Prov. 18:12-13**). Be open-minded and willing to hear any evidence that they might have for their beliefs and practices. Just as we hope for positive change in the people we teach, we too must demonstrate a willingness to change our own beliefs and practices when we are corrected (e.g., **Acts 18:24-26**).

Speak in Terms of Evidence

When making the offer to listen to other people's interpretation of Scripture, be sure to include this request: "You must have evidence to support your interpretation over mine. What is it?" Before allowing an exchange of interpretations to take place, it is important to come to a mutual agreement that true, saving faith is based on the evidence or the teaching of the Scriptures: "*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (**Rom. 10:17**).

We must speak of the importance of providing book, chapter, and verse for the beliefs that we hold (**1 Pet. 4:11; Col. 3:17**). We must emphasize that a fair hearing must be given to all that God has said on the matter to get a proper understanding of God's will. When studying any subject, "*the whole counsel of God*" (**Acts 20:27**) should be sought in the pursuit for the truth. Passages must be examined in the proper context. Concordances and He-

brew or Greek Bible dictionaries are very helpful to gather even more evidence.

No Legitimate Interpretations?

Sometimes people reject the truth because they are convinced that no interpretation of Scripture can be relied on as the truth. Many are convinced that every interpretation involves man's opinions and thus everything is spun, biased, or slanted to favor a particular doctrine, practice, or personal viewpoint.

Let us admit the fact that there are indeed many interpretations of Scripture offered today that are according to man's opinions that must be rejected (**2 Pet. 3:15-17**). However, not all interpretations are false. There are real differences between interpretations. Many will lead to eternal destruction, yet only the truth will lead to eternal life (**Matt. 7:13-14**).

Finding the truth requires a recognition that there is ultimately only one right interpretation of the Scriptures. There is only one faith (**Eph. 4:5; Jude 3**) or one truth (**John 8:32; 17:17**) that God has revealed to us. God has promised us that we can know what the truth is (**1 Tim. 2:4; Eph. 3:4**). These facts ought to bring hope to the skeptic who says there are no legitimate interpretations.

Will Any Interpretation of Scripture Do?

Sometimes people take the opposite extreme and declare that though there is only one faith or truth, it is too confusing or difficult to find. Many people, in response to the multitude of religious groups and doctrines, conclude that almost any interpretation will do. Rather than rule out certain religious beliefs on the basis of Scripture, there is the desire to respect every belief as equal in merit or legitimacy. Many people want to "just get along" and do not want to debate or discuss their differences. The preferred "solution" of many is to just choose the interpretation that personally suits you best and call that "the truth."

Some Interpretations Are Better or More Plausible Than Others

The answer to any confusion or challenge that we may have in searching for the truth is not to choose just any interpretation of Scripture! Imagine the trouble we would

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have in our lives if we handled all of our decisions this way. For example, would we be willing to randomly choose a marriage partner? Would we choose just any car to drive or any house to live in? Would any of us be willing to invest our hard earned savings into just any type of investment? When we are sick, would we decide that just any medicine or treatment will make us well? Of course not! In making any important decision in life, to choose wisely requires that we learn all that we can about the issue or problem that is at hand. The same is true in deciding what we should believe and practice in religion from the Scriptures.

So which interpretation of Scripture should one choose? To sift through the interpretations that are possible and decide on only one requires that we accept the interpretation that is most plausible, probable, or credible. Rather than foolishly accept just any interpretation of Scripture, let us choose the one that provides the most evidence (e.g., true to the context of the passage, in harmony with parallel passages on the same subject, true to

the actual meaning of Bible words, etc.). "*So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is*" (**Eph. 5:17**).

God Provides Us with Rules for Interpretation

Thankfully, God provides us with some assistance on how to interpret the Scripture right in the Word itself! The Lord gives us the help we need to determine the truth for what we are to believe and practice in religion. There are four major rules He provides: (1) Direct statements or commands we must obey (e.g., **John 14:15; 2 Pet. 3:1-2**); (2) Divinely approved examples we are to follow (e.g., **1 Pet. 2:21; Phil. 3:17; Acts 2:42**); (3) Necessary implications, meaning conclusions we can make from what is implied in Scripture (e.g., **Mat. 22:41-46**); (4) Respect for the silence of God, meaning we restrict ourselves to what God has revealed in the Scriptures to determine His will (**Deut. 29:29**). We do not add to it or take away from it (**Rev. 22:18-19**). Let us all be true to God and respect His word in the interpretation of the Scriptures.

Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦

"That Which Saves Men"

By Jarrod Jacobs

There is much religious confusion today. One way in which men have been fooled is in the teaching which says that one thing (specifically, faith) alone saves a man. Many wish to tell men that once they have faith, then they are saved from their sins. Is this what the Bible teaches? Consider the verses below. The Bible teaches that:

- 1) People saw salvation when John preached (**Lk. 1:77, 3:6**).
- 2) Salvation came through Christ (**Matt. 1:21; Lk. 2:30, 19:9-10; Jn. 3:17, 10:9, 12:47; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 1:15; Heb. 7:25; Jas. 4:12; Rom. 4:25**).
- 3) Paul and Barnabas showed people "*the way of salvation*" (**Acts 16:17**).
- 4) The Gospel is God's power to salvation (**Rom. 1:16; Eph. 1:13; Jas. 1:21; 1 Cor. 15:1-2; Gal. 2:16**).
- 5) Man must believe and confess Christ in order to be saved (**Rom. 10:9-10**).
- 6) "*Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation*" (**11 Cor. 7:10**). Repentance of sins saves man (**Acts 2:38**).
- 7) God's grace saves us (**Tit. 2:11, 3:7; Acts 15:11; Eph. 2:5, 8; 11 Tim. 1:9; Rom. 3:24**).
- 8) Obedience to Christ saves us (**Heb. 5:8-9; Rom. 2:13; Matt. 7:21; Jas. 2:24**).
- 9) Faith saves us (**Mk. 16:16; 1 Pet. 1:9-10; 1 Cor. 1:21; Heb. 10:39; Lk. 8:12; Acts 10:43, 13:39, 16:11; Eph. 2:8;**

Rom. 3:25, 28, 30, 5:1; Gal. 3:8).

10) Salvation is seen in God's longsuffering (**11 Pet. 3:15; Rom. 3:25**).

11) People were commanded to "*save themselves*." Therefore, they were expected to do something (**Acts 2:40; 1 Tim. 4:16**).

12) The preaching of the Gospel saves (**1 Cor. 1:21**).

13) Baptism saves us (**1 Pet. 3:21; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38, 22:16; Tit. 3:5; 1 Cor. 6:11; Jn. 3:3-5; Eph. 5:26**).

14) The one who endures to the end will be saved (**Matt. 24:13; Mk. 13:13**).

15) The word of God/Christ saves (**Jn. 5:34; 11 Tim. 3:15; Acts 11:14**).

16) "*Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved*" (**Acts 2:21; Rom. 10:13**).

17) The blood of Christ saves us (**Rom. 3:25, 5:9; Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:22; Rev. 1:5**).

18) We are saved by the life of Christ (**Rom. 5:10**).

19) We are saved by hope (**Rom. 8:24**).

20) We must love the truth to be saved (**11 Thess. 2:10**).

21) God's mercy saves us (**Tit. 3:5**).

22) God saves us (**Rom. 3:25, 30, 8:33; Gal. 3:8**).

23) Our own words can save or condemn us (**Matt. 12:36-37**).

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