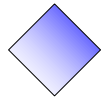


# The Voice of Truth



October 13, 2013

## That's Just Your Interpretation!

By Jimmy Pettigrew

That's just your interpretation! Think for a moment. How many times do we hear this statement when talking about God's Word with people! We talk about baptism for the remission of sins that is just your interpretation! That instrumental music in worship is sinful, that is just your interpretation, you've got your view of what the passage means and I've mine!

What do people usually mean when they say this statement: That's just your interpretation? They mean you've got your belief, your opinion, your feelings, what a certain passage means and I've got mine, and who's to say mine's wrong and yours is right? Nevertheless, the Bible portrays a completely different picture.

Every responsible individual can understand the Bible. God has given us a written revelation with the understanding that it can be correctly comprehended. This means that for every teaching, there is a meaning that God originally intended to convey. For the Bible, when understood, is a perfect unity. It yields the same message and truths to every man when it is understood. It is our task to ascertain that one correct interpretation. There's only one such interpretation to any given passage, the right one, God's view! All men are capable of understanding the Bible. *"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself"* (John 7:17). We could not conceive of our God being so devoid of love and consideration as to give to men a book which he must understand and whose commandments he must obey to have eternal life and then to withhold from man the faculty for understanding the Bible correctly. God made it clear we can arrive at the proper view. Jesus said, *"You shall know the truth . . ."* (John 8:32). In this statement the Lord clearly says that it is possible for us to know truth, and know that we know it. *"But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord"* (Jer. 9:24). We are not to be agnostic

and unsure. We are to be confident and believing. Paul said, *"Now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment"* (1 Cor. 1:10). We are to be of one mind (2 Cor. 13:11). If we are made to see the Bible differently how can we be perfectly joined together in the same mind, one mind? Peter said, *"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God"* (1 Peter 4:11). He who speaks as the oracles of God is unquestionably bound to speak not only the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), but also only that which is authorized by God's Word. These things we must speak (Titus 2:15)! Paul said, *"rightly divide (handle aright) the word of truth"* (2 Tim. 2:15). Notice that all these passages are based upon the preconception that individuals can, with proper study and rational reasoning, arrive at the conclusions that God intended to deliver.

So, there's NO such thing as my interpretation and your interpretation! There is only God's meaning, and with diligent, logical study we can arrive at the truth on any subject that is vital to our spiritual well-being. This is possible when all proposing to serve the Christ confined their speaking to the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11), recognizing only the Word as authority (2 Tim. 3:16-17), be about the business of studying and searching God's book (Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:21). We need to study the Bible with the determination to know what it teaches, making an honest search to determine if we really do have the truth. What is God's meaning of this passage, what is God saying? When we find truth, it should be accepted and obeyed! We must cautiously refrain from misinterpreting and misusing Scripture (2 Cor. 4:2; 2 Peter 3:16). We must take heed how we hear (Luke 8:18), and make certain our hearts are genuinely receptive to the truth (Luke 8:15). The Bible must be our standard of righteousness; any other standard is false (Gal. 1:6-8). Unless we refrain from elevating human opinion above the faith, the Gospel, we will never see God's

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meaning! "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not (to go) beyond the things which are written" (1 Cor. 4:6).

So, there is no such thing as your interpretation and my interpretation! We can be certain of our ability to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:3-4). ♦

## Are We Saved By Faith Alone?

### By David J. Riggs

John 3:16 teaches "faith" ("belief"), but does not teach, "faith alone" or "faith only." "Faith alone" is nowhere taught in the Scriptures. Faith is emphasized, but faith only is condemned. James said, "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only." (James 2:24). Many of the chief rulers had only faith or faith alone and were condemned. "Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." (John 12:42-43).

A religion that requires faith and obedience is the religion of the Bible. Heb. 5:9 says, "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him..." The whole system of faith-only religion is condemned by one simple statement of our Lord, "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Jesus often taught that we must believe and obey. "If you love Me, keep My commandments." (John 14:15), "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me..." (John 14:21). Rev. 22:14 says, "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city."

There is a world of difference between being saved by faith and being saved by faith alone. Faith is absolutely necessary. We are justified by faith (Rom. 5:1). Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). Faith is everywhere taught in the Scriptures. However, faith only is nowhere taught. The only time that "faith" and "only" are together in the Bible is in James 2:24 and it says, "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only."

Peter said, "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?" (1 Pet. 4:17). Paul said, "And to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2

Thess. 1:7-8). Rom. 10:16 says, "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our report?'" Jesus said, "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock." (Matt. 7:24). Consequently, beyond any doubt, we must not only believe the gospel, but must obey it as well.

If one is saved by "faith alone," it cannot be by grace. When one teaches "faith alone," he excludes everything else. The truth is that many things have a part in our salvation. Faith, grace, obedience, works of God, etc., all play a part in our salvation. Even the grace of God teaches us godly behavior (godly conduct) as shown in Titus 2:11-12, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age." The Bible nowhere teaches grace alone, faith alone, or works alone. Heb. 11:7 says, "By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." Heb. 11:8 says, "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going." Also, please examine the rest of Hebrews 11 which shows how the faithful were moved by faith to obey.

Some will say, "What about the jailer who was told, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household?'" (Acts 16:31). The jailer was told those words because it is the starting point for every unbeliever. The next verses show (Acts 16:31-34) that the jailer and his household, after believing on the Lord, obeyed the Lord. They responded to the things commanded by the Lord. Remember, Heb. 5:9 says, "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." James 1:25 says, "But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does."

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People often say, "You can't trust in your good works to save you." I don't know of a single Christian, and have never met one, who trusts in his good works alone, or his good life alone to save him. True Christians simply trust in the Lord and do what He commanded. Jesus Himself went about doing the works of God. He said, "*I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work.*" (**John 9:4**). "*I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.*" (**John 17:4**). When Jesus did the works of God, did He trust in His works? Likewise, we do not trust in our works to save us. We simply do the Lord's works, trusting in Him to save us as He has promised. **1 Pet. 4:19** says, "*Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.*" **Gal. 5:6** says, "*For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.*" **Eccl. 12:13-14** says, "*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, Whether it is good or whether it is evil.*"

Furthermore, people often say, "We are saved by the blood of Christ, and if one adds some kind of works, including baptism, he defeats salvation by the blood." According to this, one could not add faith because it would defeat salvation by the blood. Jesus said, "*This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.*" (**John 6:29**). Thus, according to Jesus, faith is a work which God ordained. Jesus Himself added many works to His teaching; i.e., faith, repentance, confession, baptism. He said, "*He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*" (**Mark 16:16**). Paul added works by saying the grace of God teaches them (**Titus. 2:11-12**). Peter added works (**Acts 2:38**), and so did John (**1 John 2:3**). Jesus said, "*You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.*" (**John 15:14**). Thus, one can teach that one is saved by the blood of Christ, and then add the works which God ordained, which includes baptism.

Additionally, people often cite **Eph. 2:8-9** and **Rom. 11:6** to teach that we are not saved by works. However, neither of the passages teach that the works of God are not required. When it says, "not of works" which works are under consideration? There are at least four kinds of works mentioned in the Scriptures: (1) Evil works, works of the flesh, or works of the devil (**Gal. 5:19-21**); (2) Works of the Law of Moses (**Gal. 2:16; Rom. 2:16**); (3) Man's own works, or works of man's own choosing - "*not according to*

*our works*" (**2 Tim. 1:9**), "*not by works of righteousness which we have done*" (**Titus 3:5**); and (4) The works of God—the works which God ordained in the Scriptures (**2 Tim. 3:16-17**). We are to abound in every good work (**2 Cor. 9:8**). We are to be ready to every good work (**Titus 3:1**). We are to be fruitful in every good work (**Col. 1:10**). We are to provoke to love and good works (**Heb. 10:24**). We are to work righteousness (**Acts 10:34-35**). If we, from our own devising command a work; i.e., if we had originated baptism, we could not be saved by it. However, if it is a work of God, it is required, and we are saved by it. **1 Pet. 3:21** says, "*There is also an antitype which now saves us; baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*" Thus, baptism is a work of God, not a work of man. **Luke 7:30** says, "*But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.*" The same is true for those who reject the baptism of Christ today.

The "works" under consideration in **Eph. 2:9** are the works of man's own devising that he could boast in. We are not saved by those. **Eph. 2:8-9** is not referring to the works of God because the very next verse says, "*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*" (**Eph. 2:10**).

Paul is showing in **Rom. 11:6** that the source or means of the election is not of works. In other words, the election (the origin of God's choices) came as result of grace, not works. Paul is not teaching in **Rom. 11:6** that works are not required. He taught obedience to the faith (**Rom. 1:5; 16:26**). He taught that one must be buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life (**Rom. 6:3-5**). He taught that one must present his members as instruments of righteousness (**Rom. 6:13**). He gave many commands and exhortations to godly living, i.e., **Rom. 12:6-21**. Also he said, "*But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*" (**Rom. 6:17-18**)

Surely, the "faith alone" religion is a do-nothing religion. It cannot be the religion of Christ. Jesus said, "*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*" (**Matt. 7:21**).

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In closing, I encourage and exhort you to carefully and honestly consider all that the holy Scriptures teach regarding obedience. Many think they trust and love the Lord. Indeed, they think they know God. However, in reality they do not love the Lord nor do they know God. Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." (John 14:15). "For

this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome." (1 John 5:3). "He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him." (1 John 2:4-5). Credit: <http://oakridgechurch.com/riggs/> ♦

### Enemy Or Ally? By Jarrod Jacobs

God expects us to make a distinction between truth and error. Unfortunately, many people are not making the distinction. Whether it is due to friendships, or other associations, we find many trying to stay "allies" with all and "enemies" to none.

*light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God" (II Cor. 6:14-16).*

Jesus said this is not possible to be allies to all and enemies to none. In fact, even the world knows this is not possible. Christ said, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (Jn. 15:18-19). If we are living as Christ would have us live, we can not be friends with the world.

Who are our enemies? Who are our allies? The Bible shows us that choosing in one category automatically decides the other category! James made this distinction clear when he wrote, "Friendship with the world is enmity with God .... Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (Jas. 4:4). In like manner, Jesus told His followers, "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other...." (Matt. 6:24). Therefore, our enemies are determined by who we choose as allies, and vice versa. So, what is YOUR choice? Choose wisely, as some choices we may only get to make once! Credit: *The Old Paths - 7/29/12* ♦

The apostle Paul knew that Christians should "be separate" from the world. He asked, "What partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has

**Either the Bible will keep you from sin . . .  
Or sin will keep you from the Bible. ♦**

### What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3
- Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24
- Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30
- Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21
- Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27
- Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

### About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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**How to Contact Us**

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**Schedule of Assembly**

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**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