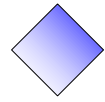


# The Voice of Truth



October 27, 2013

## The Bible Demands That People Read It!

By Jimmy Pettigrew

The Bible, the word of God, demands that people read and study this book. Why? It will save your soul! (**James 1:21; Acts 13:26; Romans 1:16**).

The Scriptures can help us avoid sinning against God (**Psalm 119:11**). It is what we are to live for, Jesus said, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (**Matthew 4:4**). Again Jesus said "to those Jews that had believed of him, If ye abide in my word, then are you truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (**John 8:31-32**). Truth is from heaven (**John 1:17; 14:6; 16:13**). It must be known (**John 8:32**), believed (**2 Thessalonians 2:12**), loved (**2 Thessalonians 2:10**), and obeyed (**1 Peter 1:22; Galatians 5:7**). Only then can it set one free (**John 8:32**) and sanctify (**John 17:17**). We can know truth, but only by reading truth. Notice another passage. Paul said, "whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ" (**Ephesians 3:4**). When we read, we understand God's plan of salvation for mankind. We learn what God would have us to do to please Him and make heaven our home. We also read, "And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea" (**Colossians 4:16**). Also we read, "I adjure you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the brethren" (**1 Thessalonians 5:27**). As the Jews listened to "the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath" (**Acts 13:27**), so must we read the inspired word today. The scriptures were read every sabbath day in their synagogues, though the scriptures were read so constantly, yet they were ignorant of their true meaning. They were blinded by pride, prejudice, and preconceived opinions. People may often in this way read the Bible and never really come to the knowledge of truth. Peter tells us, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him (be) the glory

*both now and for ever. Amen"* (**2 Peter 3:18**). Notice again, "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, (even) Jesus Christ" (**John 17:3**). "To know thee the only true God" is to know and regard Him as supreme. It is to yield our whole soul to Him, and strive to obey His law. God is pleased with those who desire to understand what He is; what He does; what He purposes; what He commands. We are to increase in the knowledge of God (**Colossians 1:10**). How? By reading and studying His word (**2 Timothy 2:15**). We can come to Christ no other way! One must learn the word before he is qualified to come to Christ. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (**John 6:44-45**). That is the reason why we should search the scriptures daily (**Acts 17:11**) and study to show thyself approved unto God (**2 Timothy 2:15**). It is the only way that people could benefit from the scriptures. Reading the scriptures helps us to grow into what Christ would have us to be. Am I growing? Have I been growing in the past? Am I growing now? Am I becoming more of what God and Christ would have me to be? It ought to be obvious, therefore, that if we are going to become mighty in God's kingdom, we must once again become hungry for the word of God. For any who would find the purpose of life, and eternity, the Bible demands that it be read!

Once we were well known for our knowledge of scriptures. Now we are becoming notorious for our ignorance. Please read the Bible, give yourself to its study, mold your life to its teaching, and it will be to you the power of God unto salvation (**Romans 1:16**). Then what the Bible makes of you will be worth it, as you live in faith and hope of that eternity with the Savior. ♦

**When an archer misses the mark, he turns and looks for the fault within himself.  
Failure to hit the bull's-eye is never the fault of the target. To improve your aim –  
Improve yourself. ♦**

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## THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY AUTHORITY

By David J. Riggs

In this age, God speaks to us through His Son, Jesus Christ (**Heb. 1:1-2**). Christ spoke the words and commandments given to Him from the Father (**John 12:49-50**). We are to hear Jesus—not Moses or Elijah (**Mark 9:2-8**). Christ is the mediator of the New Testament (**Heb. 9:15-17**). Christ is that great prophet who was to come (**Deut. 18:15, 19; Acts 3:22-23**). The name of Jesus is the only name by which we can be saved (**Acts 4:12**). We cannot reject His Word and be guiltless (**John 12:48**). God, therefore, makes known His will to us today through His Son.

Jesus makes known God's will through His apostles and prophets. Christ gave the same words and commandments that he received from the Father to His twelve apostles (**John 17:6-8, 17-20**). He promised His apostles the Holy Spirit (**John 14:25-26; 15:26-27; 16:13-15**). Please notice that the promise was to the apostles only. They were the ones to whom Jesus was speaking; they were the ones who had been with Him from the beginning. The Holy Spirit would be in them and would enable them to teach all the truth concerning the will of God.

The apostles were to wait in Jerusalem to receive the promise (**Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8**). This was in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies (**Isaiah 2:2-3; Micah 4:2**). The apostles received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost as recorded in **Acts 2:1-4**. Thus, they began to proclaim by inspiration the will or law of God in accord with the words of Jesus, *"Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."* (**Matt. 18:18**). The meaning is not that the binding and loosing would come from their own devising—God alone is the lawgiver (**James 4:12**)—but with the Holy Spirit guiding them they would proclaim the things which God wanted bound and loosed; e.g., **Acts 2:38; Rom. 8:2**.

Up to the point as recorded in **Acts 2**, only the twelve had obtained the ability to speak by the inspiration of God. **Verse 14** of **Acts 2** shows that Peter, standing up with the eleven, declared that the gift which they had received was in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. **Verse 43** says, *"And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles."* Consequently, the apostles up to this point were the only ones who had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. God worked with them by giving them miraculous powers (**Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4**). The purpose and design of those powers was to "confirm the word," that is, to truly demonstrate they were speaking

the Word of God.

As we read a little farther in the book of Acts we see how New Testament prophets were made. The first account of someone besides an apostle working a miracle is that of Stephen (**Acts 6:8**). Stephen, as well as Philip, was of the seven on whom the apostles had laid their hands (**Acts 6:6**). As we read still farther, we see that Philip is the next person who was able to work miracles (**Acts 8:6**). Although Philip was a New Testament prophet and could work miracles, he was unable to give the Holy Spirit to others. Only the apostles were empowered with that ability.

In **Acts 8:14-19** we notice that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands. This is the only way New Testament prophets were made and the prophets themselves were unable to give the Spirit to others. Philip could not give the Holy Spirit to the people of Samaria. Some apostles, Peter and John, had to be sent from Jerusalem before that could be done. When an apostle laid his hands on someone, he received miraculous powers. (See **Acts 19:6**). Cornelius and his household received the "like gift" as the apostles for the specific purpose of showing God's acceptance of the Gentiles into the New Covenant (**Acts 11:14-18**).

The apostles and prophets made known God's will through their inspired writings. There was a time when all of the Word of God was given orally—by word of mouth of the inspired apostles and prophets. Christians were at first guided solely by the inspired teachers who were present with them (**1 Cor. 2:3-13; Acts 20:18-27**). There was a period when Christians were guided both by having inspired men in their presence and by epistles written by inspired men. *"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."* (**2 Thess. 2:15**).

When the apostles and prophets passed from the earth, their inspired writings became the only means by which we receive God's will. When the apostles and prophets approached their deaths, they did not leave us other men who would take their places. They did not direct us to other men who would have miraculous powers and revelations. Instead, they left their inspired writings and pointed us to them (**2 Tim. 3:15-17**). Thus, today we obtain a knowledge of God's will, not through living spiritual men or

*Continued from Page Two, "What The Empty Tomb Means"*

prophets, but through the written inspired Word (**1 Cor. 14:37; Eph. 3:2-5**). God's will was delivered at first in oral form only, then both orally and written, and now in written form only.

It is important for us to understand how the apostles witness to us today. It is not through other men; it is impossible for a man in our time to be a witness in the sense the apostles were. Instead, it is through their writings—the Holy Scriptures. The apostle John in his introduction to his first epistle declared that he was bearing witness to those things which they had heard, which they had seen with their eyes, which they had touched with their hands, concerning the Word of life. He bore witness to those things by writing them for us. *"And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."* (**See 1 John 1:1-4**).

The apostles' testimony given in their writings was to *"...All that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours"* (**1 Cor. 1:2**) and *"...To the faithful in Christ Jesus"* (**Eph. 1:1**). Thus, the apostles witness to us today through their writings and this is the only way their unerring guidance is transmitted to the present age. It is the only way God's Word is delivered to us today.

There are no persons with miraculous powers today. The miraculous powers such as working miracles, speaking in tongues and prophesying were given only through the laying on of the apostles' hands (**Acts 8:14-19**). The apostles passed from this life many years ago and, thus, there is no way for men to have those powers today. No one in this age has received the powers to demonstrate God's acceptance of the Gentiles. God accomplished that when he poured out the Holy Spirit upon the household of Cornelius (**Acts 11:15-18**).

The apostle Paul very plainly revealed that miraculous powers were to be done away. He said, *"...Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."* (**1 Cor. 13:8-10**). Notice that Paul did not say, *"when he which is perfect is*

*come"* but *"when that which is perfect is come."* The **"perfect"** to which he referred can only be the perfect law of liberty. (See **James 1:25; 2:12**).

Men do not have miraculous powers and revelations today because there is no need or purpose for them. They do not answer any purpose in the divine arrangement. There is no incompleteness or vacuum that needs to be filled by their appearance. Is there anything today's so-called "tongue speakers" or "miracle workers" can provide which is not already furnished by the Scriptures?

### THE SCRIPTURES FURNISH

**All necessary things which Jesus did - Acts 1:1-2**  
**Certainty of His action and teaching - Luke 1:3-4**  
**Life in the name of Jesus - John 20:30-31**  
**Instructions to salvation - 2 Tim. 3:15**  
**Commands of the Lord - 1 Cor. 14:37**  
**The proper conduct - 1 Tim. 3:14-15**  
**Every good work - 2 Tim. 3:16-17**  
**Protection against sin - 1 John 2:1**  
**An assurance of eternal life - 1 John 5:13**  
**Standard by which teachers are tested - Acts 17:11**  
**Standard which we cannot go beyond - 1 Cor. 4:6**  
**Blessings from God - Rev. 1:3**  
**Joy that is complete - 1 John 1:3-4**  
**Standard of judgment - Rev. 20:12**

There are no miraculous powers and revelations today because God's Word has already been delivered. There is nothing other men can supply which the apostles and prophets have not already delivered. Jude said, *"...Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."* (**Jude 3**). There is nothing modern day "revealers" or "tongue speakers" can provide which is not already provided in Christ. God's will reached its perfection in Christ. The whole plan of God was *"...According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (**Eph. 3:11**). The complete revelation of God's will comes through Christ and is recorded in the Scriptures. Paul warned: *"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."* (**Gal. 1:8**). The Bible alone is the standard of authority in all matters of faith and practice. Credit: <http://oakridgechurch.com/riggs/> ♦

Sin will take you farther than you  
 Ever wanted to go.  
 Keep you longer than you ever wanted  
 To stay and cost you  
 More than you ever wanted to pay. ♦

# “86,400”

By Jarrod Jacobs

86,400 is quite a large number, isn't it? Imagine someone giving you \$86,400 today. What might you do with it? Might you pay off your bills, your mortgage, and other things with that kind of money? What if someone gave you 86,400 gold bars? Certainly, one would be quite blessed if he had 86,400 close friends.

86,400 is not an arbitrary number, though. It has significance in our lives. What is it that equals 86,400? It is not the number of bones in one's body. It is not the number of days in a year. In fact, 86,400 equals the number of **seconds in one day!!!**

Yes, each day has 86,400 seconds of time in which to live, work, and serve God. Thus, the obvious question is: How are we using this time? Someone once made the observation that it would be very difficult for one to spend \$86,400 each day with the stipulation that he could not save it, nor “invest” it, etc., and at the end of the day, he would lose any money he had not spent. This is similar to God's gift of 86,400 seconds per day. The seconds we have today will be used up in this day with no chance of “retaining”, “investing” or “saving” the “unused seconds”! At the end of the day, they are gone forever!

With this in mind, I will say it bothers me to hear someone use the expression, “kill time.” Please understand, I don't think that phrase is sinful to speak, but it bothers me because it expresses an attitude that we do not appreciate God's gift of time like we should (Col. 4:5). Time should not be “killed,” wasted, etc., but savored and used wisely (Eph. 5:16). This is stated again and again in the Bible. Moses asked God to, “teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Ps. 90:12).

Man's life has been compared in Scripture to a vapor (Jas. 4:14). It has also been compared to grass or a flower, which “withers” and “falls away” in time (I Pet. 1:24). Job said, “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble” (Job 14:1). He also said, “My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope” (Job 7:6). The apostle Paul recognized the brevity of life when he stressed the importance of obeying God “now” (II Cor. 6:2). It is also written, “To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts” (Heb. 3:7-8). Are we listening?

Friends, how are we using our time? There is continued emphasis in Scripture on one doing what is right “now” and “today”! Why such emphasis? It is because we do not know what will happen in a day (Prov. 27:1).

86,400 seconds is all we have been given for this day. How will we use this precious time? Will it be used in self-ish pursuits, or in godly efforts? If the Lord wills, and we wake up to a new day tomorrow, how will we use the 86,400 seconds given to us on that day? The world has given us far too many distractions wherein we are encouraged to waste our time. (I say this as one who has been, and is, guilty of wasting time, too!) Yet, let us resolve today to stop wasting time and “redeem the time” we have left on earth (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5)! There are too few seconds in a day the way it is!

If the Lord is willing for us to have them, I challenge you with this question: How will we use the 34,560,000 seconds that are left in this year? Will they be “redeemed” in the Lord's service, or will they be wasted? Choose wisely because they are quickly passing away!!! (Jas. 4:14; I Jn. 2:17; I Pet. 1:24). *Credit: The Old Paths - 11/21/10 ♦*

## POINTS TO PONDER

Minds are like parachutes, they only function when they are open.

He that lives only for this Life shall live only in this life.

"The Bread of life never becomes stale!"

## 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

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com