



Don't Claim The Bible Says It... Part 1 by Gerald Cowan

All Scriptures and comments are based on the **New King James Version**, unless otherwise noted.

Don't Claim the Bible Says It If It Doesn't Actually Say It - Part 1

This is in continuation and consequence of what was said in the previous essay about the blind leading the blind and the ignorant teaching the ignorant. We will attend to some significant misquotations and misapplications of what the Bible says, with emphasis on two of the most egregious but widely believed errors.

DOES THE BIBLE SAY DO NOT JUDGE? IT DOES NOT SAY THAT.

"Do not judge" (**Matthew 7:1**) is among the most misquoted and misapplied scripture references. It is the first few words of a statement attributed to Jesus in which he warns against improper, unjust and, especially, hypocritical judgment. In the seventh chapter of Matthew (stop right now and read it) Jesus recommends that we identify truth and error, false prophets and true ones, good fruits and bad ones, good trees and bad ones, dogs, pigs, sheep, wolves (including those dressed to look like sheep) and all others pretending to be something they are not. Jesus did say that all of one's judgments should be righteous (**John 7:24**). It is important to judge right from wrong, good from bad, Christian from non-Christian, and scriptural from non-scriptural. Even the claim that everyone has a right to his or her own opinion is (an unwarranted *judgment*). More about that later.

DOES THE BIBLE SAY ONE IS SAVED BY GRACE ALONE THROUGH FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE? IT DOES NOT SAY THAT.

We are saved by *faith*, cannot be saved without it (**Hebrews 11:1, 6**). But faith is more than belief in God or belief that Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose up to life again in payment for your sins and that he somehow continues to secure your redemption and salvation so it can't be lost. Faith is a careful examination of the evidence of the Lord and His works, a conviction and commitment to obeying His will, commandments, and requirements – faith is a life lived in active cooperative obedience to God's work and will (**Acts 2:40; Philippians 2:12-13**). We are saved by and through the *grace* of God given to us in Christ (**Ephesians 2:5; 2 Timothy 1:9**), but it is not a reward for our good works and it is not unconditional. For example: it cannot be separated from God's *mercy* and *love* (**Ephesians 2:4**) and is not given apart from *faith* – *saved by grace through faith* (**Ephesians 2:8**). We are saved by *Christ*, cannot be saved without him or apart from him (**Acts 4:12**), but not Christ alone. Even the works of Christ were and are the works and will of God (**Hebrews 10:3**). The works and will of God and Christ are continued by the Holy Spirit, sent for that purpose (**John 14:26; 16:5-11**). Even the works of other Christians, the church, and yourself are required (**Jude 1:20; 1 Corinthians 7:16; 1 Corinthians 9:16-22** *that by all means I (Paul) may save some*). There is no

mention of salvation being by grace alone or by Christ alone. But *faith alone* is mentioned in regard to justification (which must include salvation from sin) in **James 2:24**. But notice the negative: It is not by faith alone by rather the result of the works included in and required by faith. Faith without works is dead – incomplete and ineffective (**James 2:26**). It is only when one has obeyed from the heart the doctrine delivered by God that one becomes free from sin and able to serve God in righteousness so that the gift of God, eternal life can be received (**Romans 6:17-18, Romans 6:22-23**).

DOES THE BIBLE SAY GOD WANTS YOU TO BE HAPPY? IT DOES NOT SAY THAT.

There are many “beatitudes” in the Bible, in both the Old and New Testament writings. The beatitudes of Jesus (**Matthew 5:1-12**) in his sermon on the mount and elsewhere, and many similar statements by Paul, Peter, John, and others all use a special Greek word, *MAKARIOS*. It is properly translated *blessed*. KJV is not consistent; it sometimes translates it *happy*. And of course, as is typical of us, we take the remote blessing happy to mean joyful, pleased, satisfied and end up thinking God wants us to have whatever it takes to make us happy and keep us satisfied – we focus on happy rather than blessed. That, by the way, is the rationale of the LGBTQ crowd – God wit makes God happy too. God want me to be happy and this is what it takes to make me happy (?). But happy refers to what is happening: happy implies good happenings, good circumstances, good condition socially and spiritually. Unhappy implies bad happenings, bad circumstances and conditions . Neither word necessarily includes one’s attitudes or feelings about what happens to him. Blessed, on the other hand, implies only good and positive results and conditions, that one is “well off” and in a proper beneficial relationship, especially with God. We can say God wants us to be *blessed*, makes blessings possible and available to us, and is pleased when we respond to Him in such a way as to receive His blessings (**Hebrews 13:15-21**, compare **2 Peter 3:9, 15** and **1 Timothy 2:4**. What God desires is that all be blessed with salvation through repentance and obedience to His will).

DOES THE BIBLE SAY GOD WON’T ALLOW ANYTHING TO HAPPEN TO YOU THAT YOU CAN’T BEAR, ANYTHING YOU CAN’T COPE WITH? IT DOES NOT SAY THAT.

“God won’t ‘put on you’ more than you can bear” – that’s the way I’ve heard it said, more times than I can count, but I can’t recall ever saying it to anybody, not even to myself about God. You’d have a hard time proving from scripture that God “puts anything on you” in the way of hardship, burdens, troubles, etc.

This “put on you” concept is a colloquial misquotation and misunderstanding of **1 Corinthians 10:13** where it actually says God will not allow temptations or tests that you are not able to withstand successfully – that is to say, nothing that will force you to depart from the faith and lose your salvation. It does not say or imply that God is in control of everything that happens to you and that nothing happens if He does not will it and make it happen. Such fatalism by decree of God as an act of His sovereign will is completely foreign to His word.

He certainly does place upon you responsibility for your own response to what happens, what He allows to happen or causes to happen, to you or to others, or in and to the world. He places the blame upon you if you respond incorrectly or if you fail to respond properly – both such responses are *sin*. Rather, His promise is that He will provide a way of escape from the destruction of our faith, a way – wisdom to cope

and strength to endure without losing faith or any promised reward for faith (reread **1 Corinthians 10:13**, but read all of it, not just the first part of it). If you are His child, a believer, a Christian He will never cause or allow anything that He will not provide you with strength and grace to endure. There is no promise that He will prevent the bad thing from happening, or that He will prevent it from touching you. The way of escape is a way to get through it and not be overcome or spiritually destroyed by it. Only that is "the way of escape" that He makes for faith-keepers.

Romans 8:28 is often added here in this discussion to reassure us that God will make sure everything that happens is "good for us," that

God works all things together for good to those who love Him and are the called according to His purpose.

But this same reference is used by unbelievers, skeptics and enemies of the faith to show that God doesn't (perhaps can't) keep His words and promises, because obviously much of what happens to us cannot be called good. So the unbelievers say, "If God is good and all powerful why does He allow so much evil in the world, suffering, hardships, difficulties, and impossible-to-deal-with things that affect even Christians?" It's an argument that, if accepted, destroys faith in God and leads one to surrender to the existential despair of a world without God, without a Savior/ Helper, and without any real hope for change.

But the promise of God in **Romans 8:28** is not that no evil will happen to us (look at **Romans 8:35-39** for an admission from the Lord that evil things are present in the world and do affect us; but we, working with Him, have resources for overcoming and conquering them all (**8:37**). Now reread **Romans 8:28** carefully and notice two things:

1. **The promise is for a limited and select group, not for everybody.** It is only for those who truly love God and are faithfully following His will and calling (love means and includes obeying His commandments (**John 14:15**)). It is not made indiscriminately to and for everybody.
2. **In everything that happens** (not all things are easy, good, or harmless) **God works together with and for His people to bring a good final result from everything He allows to happen or causes to happen.** Implied in this is that throughout the ordeal God provides insight and strength, a way to escape spiritual damage and ultimate destruction. He knows your ability and your resources, so don't complain that He has misjudged them or has broken His word not to "put on you" more than you can bear or cope with.

We need to continue this vein of thought in an additional segment.

—-- *Gerald Cowan, Personal Periodicals Number 659, July 22, 2021*