



Oologah
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“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” Matthew 28:20

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Taking the Whole of Scripture

Tom Wacaster

“Hermeneutics” is the science of interpretation. The word is derived from the Greek mythological character, “Hermes,” the messenger of the gods and the interpreter of Jupiter. Through the years there have been a number of Bible scholars who have taken the time and effort to set forth, in writing, a systematic approach to the study and interpretation of the scriptures. The most notable works are D. R. Dungan’s Hermeneutics, and Clinton Lockhart’s Principles of Interpretation. Both of these books are still in print, and I recommend them for your consideration. Hermeneutics, then, is the science of interpreting the Scriptures.

When one properly studies a particular passage in God’s word, he is said to “exegete” the passage. “Exegesis” simply means to “lead out” or “draw out of.” It is the application of the principles of hermeneutics in bringing out the meaning of any particular passage. We could very likely write on the science of interpretation with all its varied principles and take a year or more to do so. But there is one important principle we want to address here. “How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them” (Psalm 139:17). A fundamental principle involved in the interpretation of the scriptures is the need to take the whole of God’s word into consideration in our search for truth. It is the “sum” of God’s word which must be obeyed, not just a portion thereof. Call it what you will, whether a “balance” of scripture, or as Paul put it, the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27), the end result is that we cannot pick and choose from scripture as we would food from a cafeteria line.

Let’s apply this principle to the scheme of redemption. God’s plan for man’s salvation cannot be found in any single passage of scripture. If I would learn what I must do to be saved, I must carefully examine the whole of God’s word to determine what it takes to receive forgiveness of sins. To take any single passage to the neglect of others will certainly spell doom for the sincere but misled soul. The late William Cline once wrote, “The Bible does not lend itself to false doctrine for

it is balanced in its content, complete in its message, and perfect in every way.” The mistake of isolating one passage and pressing it to the exclusion of others is a failure to respect the truth presented by the Psalmist.

The Bible plainly teaches that men must *hear* the word. “How shall they believe in him whom they have not heard” (Romans 10:14)? The Bible also teaches that men must *believe* (Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16; 8:24). But the Bible likewise teaches that men must *repent* (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31). In addition, the Bible teaches that men must *confess* with the mouth that Jesus is the Son of God (Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 16:16-18). Finally, the Bible teaches that *baptism* doth also now save us (1 Peter 3:21; Acts 2:38; 22:16).

In view of the obligatory nature of each of these commands, why is it that most of the protestant denominational world elevates “faith” above, and often to the exclusion of, all other commands? Is there not some way we can harmonize these passages, and, by taking the “sum” of God’s word, come to a conclusion that does not pit one passage against the other? Indeed there is.

If *faith* saves, and most certainly it does, then what role does *repentance* play in the process of salvation? Is it essential? To deny its essentiality is to indict our Lord and Master, for He Himself stated, “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3). The question we must ask, therefore, is “What **kind** of faith saves a man from his sins?” Taking the “sum” of God’s word, we can only conclude that the faith that saves is a faith that *includes repentance*. Men have sought to “get around” the force of this argument by suggesting that repentance precedes faith. But if repentance is produced by godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10), how can repentance be generated without faith in God?

What about **confession**? If we must confess “with the mouth” (Romans 10:9- 10), what is the relationship between saving faith and this “good confession?” Once again, the faith that saves is a faith that *includes* the good confession.

What, then, shall we do with **baptism**? If baptism “doth also now save us” (1 Peter 3:21), what relationship does faith sustain to this act that “also now saves us?” Before you ignore, dismiss, or reject the words of Peter, ask yourself this question. When Peter said that “baptism doth also now save us,” what was he saying baptism saves us from? The context shows that just as the water saved Noah from the wrath of God against a sinful world, so also baptism saves us from God’s wrath. The **kind** of faith that saves is the **kind** of faith that *includes* baptism. If not, why not?

A further examination of what baptism accomplishes should prove to any honest soul that a man is not saved from his past sins until he is immersed into that watery grave “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Please take a close look at Romans 6:3-6. When a person is baptized, he enters “into Christ” (verse 3), he enters into the “death” of Christ (verse 3), he is “buried into death” (verse 4), we are “raised to walk in newness of life” (verse 4), and the “body of sin might be destroyed” (verse 6).

If men would put aside their bias and human opinions and make an honest effort to study and apply some of the fundamental principles of interpretation, much of the division could be resolved. Unfortunately, false teaching will always exist, and error will continue to take its toll upon the religious world. Peter has warned us, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Peter 2:1). Jesus

warned us to “beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15). Such errorists will always exist. Hence the ever increasing need to not only study, but to “handle aright” the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). The American Standard Version of 1901 has this interesting foot note on this passage. It reads, “holding a straight course in the word of truth.” The only safe course to follow is to take the sum of God’s word. Anything else is wrought with danger and destruction.

Brother Johnson’s Singing

Edwin Crozier

Years ago, the elders and deacons had met about brother Johnson’s singing. He was loud and off-key most of the time. They didn’t want to discourage brother Johnson, but some of the brethren had complained that his singing was sometimes distracting.

Brothers Smith and Buford were elected to talk to Johnson and see if they could teach him how to sing more appropriately.

When they pulled up, brother Johnson was working in his field, plowing behind his mule. They pulled up in a cloud of dust and walked out on the field. They could hear Johnson’s singing broken by various commands to the mule. Buford, who had drawn the short straw, started to speak, “Brother Johnson, we don’t want to discourage you, but we have had some complaints about your singing...” Johnson cut in, hanging his head, saying “I know, brethren. I sing too loud. I never had no training, so I’m off key. I can’t carry a tune in a bucket. I tell myself each assembly that I’m not gonna sing that loud ‘cause I know it bothers people.” “But I’ll tell you brothers, every day I come out here and work this land. I see the sun rise over those mountains over thee. I hear the birds singing in the trees and see the fish jumping in the creek. At night I watch the stars sparkling down on me and the moon shining. I just can’t stop thinking about this great world God has made. And how He lets me live in it and work it.”

“Then I think about heaven and how great it must be if it is better than all that. I think about my parents, who died a couple years ago, singing around God’s throne. I think about the voice I will have there. I think about how much I want to go.”

“Then I think about how bad I have messed everything up and how Jesus left heaven to come down to this world. I can hear those Jews shouting, “Crucify Him!” I can see those Romans beating Him with that scourge. I know He did that for me.”

“Then I just can’t help it. I have to sing. I want God to know how much I love Him. I want my brothers to know how much God loves them. In fact, just thinking about it now makes me want to sing right now. Could you hold these reins for me? I just gotta let God know how great He is.”

With his tear-filled eyes looking skyward and his hands lifted up, Johnson began to sing “How Great Thou Art” as if his only audience were God Himself. He was loud and off-key. But Smith and Buford had never heard anything more beautiful. They couldn’t help but join in. When they finished, they thanked Johnson, hugged him and left.

At the next elders and deacons meeting, they reported they thought it might be a better idea if they had Johnson teach the complainers how to sing more appropriately.

Observations and Concerns

July 12, 2023

Welcome Visitors! It is our pleasure and honor to welcome you.

Praise in Psalm: “I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high” (Psalm 7:17).

Declaration of Appreciation: Often found within scripture are notes of appreciation for God’s eternal word. Let us give thanks for the “wondrous things” of His law (Psalm 119:18).

Summer Series — The speaker this evening is **Bill Dilks**. His topic is **“Happy Is He That Condemneth Not Himself”** (Romans 14:22).

We extend our sympathy to the family and friends of **Amanda Georgakus** who passed away late last week as a result of her fight against cancer. She is a friend of the Carmonas.

Remember in Prayer:

- ▶ **Lynn Dilks** had cataract surgery on her left eye last week and is doing well. She is scheduled to have cataracts removed from her right eye on Friday.
- ▶ **Sherry Carmona** is recovering from knee surgery. It has been good she’s been able to be with us recently.
- ▶ **Ron Hass** recently had bladder surgery to remove cancer. We are thankful he is recovering well, and that he was able to bring our lesson last Wednesday evening.
- ▶ **Mark Odell**, cousin of Nelda Hudson, suffered a severe fall and has facial injuries and two broken shoulders. He had surgery on both shoulders earlier this week.

Extended Prayer List: **Jim Allison** – health concerns; **Ed Carmona** – health issues; **Joyce Cash** – health difficulties; **Dan & Marcella Dennis** – health issues; **Bill Dilks** – cancer; **Sammy Gray** – health concerns; **Nelda Hudson** heart struggles; **Chuck Northrop** – blood disorder; **Vance & Darla Smith** – declining health; **Pat Taylor** – health issues; **Ed Dindy** – cancer; **Betty Jackson** – health issues; **Bobbye Mooney** – cancer; **Sam Orr** – health concerns; **LeAnna Shafer** – chemotherapy; **Jacob Webster** – dog attack.

Schedule of Services	Assignments			
		Wednesday, July 12	Sunday, July 16 AM	Sunday, July 16 PM
	Announcements	Chris Nelson	Russ Earl	Ross Swearingen
	Song Leader	Doyle Jackson	Doyle Jackson	Bill Dilks
	Prayer	Paul Praschnik	Chuck Northrop	Paul Praschnik
	Lord’s Supper (speaker)		Ross Swearingen	Doyle Jackson
	Lord’s Supper		Chris Nelson	
Sundays Bible Classes. . 9:30 AM Worship 10:30 AM Worship 5:00 PM Wednesdays Bible Classes. . 7:00 PM Website: oologahcofc.org	Lesson	Bill Dilks	Bill Dilks	Chuck Northrop
	Prayer / Door Attendant	Ross Swearingen	Paul Praschnik	Chris Nelson