

# Straight Bible Talk

Manchester Church of Christ, Share Christ's Love and Share His Message

## God's Incomparable Word, the Bible

Over 40 years ago I made a decision to become a follower of Jesus. I was baptized (immersed) for the forgiveness of my sins and I have tried to live a life that is pleasing to Him ever since.

I believe the Bible is the Word of God. I believe that it contains the answers to all of life's important questions. It tells me where I came from. It tells me what kind of person I should be. And it tells me where I am going.

I began reading the Bible, by myself, when I was about 10. The "begats" in the early chapters of Genesis bogged me down and I gave up for several years. In college, I bought my own Bible (it was a Revised Standard Version; I did not know that the Bible came in different versions) and I read through the New Testament as a college freshman. I was reading it to prove someone else was wrong, so I did not learn very much.

Over the past 40 years, I have probably read the Bible completely through about 40 or 50 times. I have read it in at least 10 different versions plus reading the Old Testament (the Tanakh) in a Jewish translation.

When someone says, "It's just the writings of men," I want to laugh. If the matter were not so serious, I would laugh. The sports page is just the writings of men. Do you question the scores when your favorite team loses? Sometimes I do, so I look at another "version." You can do the same thing with the Bible. If you are not sure of a reading in one Bible, check it with another. "Men" (and that includes women) wrote everything we

read. It is not wrong because a man wrote it. It is not necessarily true because a man wrote it either, but whether something is true or not depends on something other than, "It was just written by men."

Then there are those who think that some of the books of the Bible got lost. We have all these theological "experts" who have found the writings of the second century Gnostics. (Gnostics are people who think they know secrets that have been kept from everyone else except their little group.) They think that these writings are as authoritative as the ones that are in our Bibles.

If they really believed the Bible was the Word of God, they would not have such wild ideas. Just think. God gave us a book, but lost some parts of it! He created a universe and got through that pretty well, but He cannot handle a book with 66 parts. He just could not keep track of all those other parts and depended on the "experts" to find them for Him!

If that is the God you believe in, sorry. Mine is much better at running things and making His will known to those who seek after Him. Jesus said simply, "My words shall never pass away." He did not say, "I know you are going to lose a lot of important things, but don't worry. Someday people will find those books again and then everybody will be happy."

Then you have those folks who think that the King James Version translators were just as much inspired as the original writers of the Bible. Being thus inspired, the King James Version is the only Bible that is acceptable, all others being "perversions" or worse! I once had a fellow tell me that if

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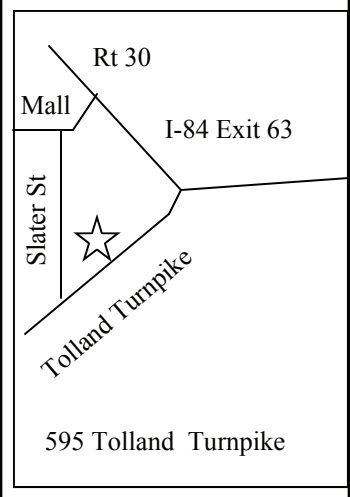
Meeting at  
595 Tolland Turnpike  
Sun Bible Classes—9 AM  
Sun Worship—10 AM

Sun Eve Worship—6:00 PM  
Wed Bible Class—7:00 PM

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Acts 17:31

All scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise indicated.



- Please send me a free Bible
- I am interested in a Bible study program
- I am looking for a church
- Please send me a free copy of the book,  
"A Christian Survival Manual"
- Please add my name to receive "Straight  
Bible Talk" free each month
- I have a question

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you were living in Spain (your language is Spanish) you would still have to read the King James Version if you wanted to know the truth. I even had someone tell me that Peter wrote in King James English!

Now if you were brought up reading a King James Version Bible, you probably have a pretty good idea of what things mean, as you read. On the other hand, if you come to the King James Version without such a background, you will probably think, "What language is this?"

Just for fun, I sometimes ask people who insist on the King James Version what the word "concupiscence" means. Most of them do not have a clue. How are you going to avoid it if you do not even know the meaning of the word? The same holds true for other words as well.

What must God think of us (including me)? He must surely shake His head in wonder at all the nonsense that goes on in the name of religion.

I have been wrong so many times that I have grown accustomed to the words, "I'm sorry, I was wrong." It is a relief to know that you can be wrong and then come out all right.

That is God's plan for dealing with people. He tells us, in His book where we are wrong. We admit that we are wrong. God forgives and then we can get on with discovering what else we are wrong about.

God uses people to help expose our mistakes. Sometimes they are people who are smarter than we. Sometimes they are people who are dumber. Smart and dumb have nothing to do with being right. Smart people miss a lot of easy things and dumb people notice things that smart people are too busy to notice.

The really dumb people are those who are not smart enough to realize when they are wrong. So, they just continue to make the same mistakes over and over again, wondering why everybody else does not "get it."

The problem with many churches is that they have bought into an organizational structure that resists change. They no longer have freedom to admit that they have bought into a flawed theology. Progress up the chain of command is based on acceptance of what others have decided long before.

The Bible no longer controls what is believed and taught. Traditions handed down from the "fathers" determine everything.

Luther understood that baptism, in the Bible, was an immersion in water. But he could not bear the thought of deciding all those who had been sprinkled as Catholics were really not baptized at all. So, the practice of sprinkling was continued. It has continued to be passed down because it seems too painful to admit wrong and start over on something so fundamental.

When the Anabaptists arose, Luther and others persecuted them. The idea that someone had to be immersed, while Biblical, went against the human desire which resists admitting wrong. Theologians agree that baptism in the Bible was an immersion, yet seem powerless to implement that idea in their churches because "that is not what we have been doing." I know, because I was there once!

God' Word is powerful. It is simple. It satisfies the deepest longings of the human nature. It leads in the way we should go. It brings joy and happiness to the soul. Yet . . .