



BIBLE REFLECTIONS

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This Newsletter

The purpose of this Newsletter is to provide you with answers to certain biblical facts which have been misconstrued or misunderstood.

Q: Who are our readers?

A: Anyone interested in matters of faith.

Q: What will our readers want to know?

A: Timely, helpful, problem-solving information regarding the Bible.

Christian 'fake news' comes from inaccurate propositions we refer to as 'doctrines', in the form of songs and hymns which become integral to believers' subconscious minds and also in tropes which become 'tradition'.

Fake News: 'God helps those who help themselves'. This is a Christian trope meant to motivate believers into action so as not to allow themselves to be overcome by temptation or discouragement. Inadvertently the adage also created a sense of co-operative redemption. 'Yes, Jesus is the Saviour but . . .' 'Yes, salvation is by grace but . . .' This saying allows believers to convince themselves that somehow they have a part to play in the salvific process.

Fact Check: My reticence towards this trope is that while it appears to contain kernels of truth, yet it quickly descends into some version of legalism even when we are not cognizant of it. I admit that God does not expect his people to sit idly by while he does everything. If that were true, it would make complete nonsense of all the laws he gave. Nevertheless, the undertone of the Bible is more about God making it possible for us to become active believers. He is cause, empowerment and finishing touch in the whole process. I would like to highlight two episodes from the Bible which bear this out. In Zec 3 we have the case of Joshua the high priest standing in God's presence all covered in filth and rightly Satan took this opportunity to accuse and malign Joshua for being an abject failure. God responded by saying it did not matter because he had plucked Joshua from fire and he ensured Joshua's purity. In Phil 4, Paul wrote, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' The context of these words is highly significant. Paul was under house arrest in Rome waiting for what he believed would be his execution. In his most helpless state, he felt strongest. There is a treasure trove of such accounts in the Bible. The point is that we have nothing to do with salvation (see Eph 2.8-10) but the ensuing saved life is ours to claim. Even in this, we only succeed because God 'who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns' (Phil 1.6 NLT).

I am drawn to the following assertion of Paul, 'What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with my understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with my understanding.' (1 Cor 14.15 HCSB). I suggest this maxim should be our *modus operandi* when we contemplate theological and biblical truths. In a world filled with 'fake news', the Church should be the bearer of real good news not more 'fake news'.

