



# 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:** A rather intriguing Christian trope goes like this, 'God will never give you more than you can handle'. This adage is very comforting when we are confronted with trials and challenges to life and faith. There even seems to be some credible biblical evidence in 1 Cor 10.13: 'No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it' (NRSV).

**Fact Check:** A closer examination of the verse reveals certain nuances which are ignored when the verse is given the psychological twist it often receives. First, a close examination of the discrete unit context, verses 7-14, reveals a rather different picture. The unit begins with 'do not be idolaters' and ends with 'flee from idolatry'. This addresses a very specific challenge, not a generic one. Second, a particular Greek word is utilised, once in verb form (peirazo) and twice as noun (peirasmos). This Greek word has a fairly wide semantic range which includes 'tried/trial, testing/test, tempt/temptation' as evident in various translators' choices. Third, none of us faces the exact same challenges in life or to our faith. Therefore, the verse is not an elixir for all tests, trials or temptations. None of us has ever faced a Job level suffering or Paul's incredible persecutions. Nevertheless, the underlying principle concerns the presence and empowerment of God in difficult times and in a manner of speaking we all face the challenge of idolatry due to the rampant secularism of our present world. I think a better understanding of this promise arrives when we read it in conjunction with Jesus' words in John 16.33: 'I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution [a different Greek word; one more generic in nature]. But take courage; I have conquered the world!' (NRSV).

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'.

