



## WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL

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### Where is That in the Bible? Part 1

By Tal Davis

We all take a lot of things for granted. That is to say, we believe certain things are true because everyone says it is. Unfortunately, that is also true with the Bible. Many people, even most Christians, have been taught that certain things are said in the Bible, and we take it for granted that they are there. In this two-part article we are going to look at some phrases and concepts that most people probably believe are taught in the Bible. We will examine them carefully to see if indeed they do come from Scripture, and if they so, do they say what people think they say. We will examine where, if anywhere in the Scripture, the idea is taught to see if it is indeed a biblical concept. We will take them in alphabetical order.

#### 1. "All dogs go to heaven."

I know we all love our pets and grieve when they die. When we are children our parents will sometimes say, to comfort us, that the Bible says "all dogs (or cats or whatever) go to heaven." Well, God bless our parents, but nowhere in the Bible is that statement ever made. In fact, no indication is given exactly what happens to animals when they die. The assumption is that they have no kind of life after death since, unlike humans, they are not made in God's image and have no immortal spirit. That being said, however, the Bible does say "*For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.*" (Romans 6:18 ESV) Perhaps that does indicate that even the animals will share in the new heaven and the new earth when Christ returns. So, maybe, and we cannot be certain of this since the Bible does not clearly say, we may see our pets again (and I kinda hope so). In any

case, this we can be sure of, if we are believers we will be fully satisfied in heaven with Jesus, with or without our pets.

#### 2. "All good people go to heaven."

When I was growing up before I became a Christian, I had the notion that the way people got to go to heaven was if they were good enough. Conversely, if they were not good, they would be sent to hell. Most of what I heard from my parents, at the church I attended, and in the media seemed to reflect that perspective. I sort of figured God graded on the curve, and if I could just be little better than the average I might make it. The problem I had was that I did not know just how good I had to be to qualify, so I was always fearful that if I were to die suddenly I would be found unfit.

Of course, that is not at all what the Bible teaches. First of all, we are all sinners and none of us are qualified to go to heaven. So in a sense I was right about myself. But the good news is that if we trust in Jesus, we can be saved from our sins – not by how good or bad we are, but by His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. We will be qualified to go to heaven because of His righteousness and grace, not ours!

#### 3. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

As a young Christian I was taught that this phrase is a direct quotation of the Bible from Proverbs 23:7. I remember looking in my RSV Bible and not finding the phrase in there. However, I did find it in the King James Version

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like this: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..." (Prov. 23:7a KJV)

The principle I was taught from this phrase was that the way a person thinks determines how he behaves. So, we must learn to think the right way so we will act in good ways. Godly people think godly thoughts, ungodly people think ungodly thoughts. Certainly, there is some truth in that assumption. However, that is not at all what the verse was talking about. Here is how it reads in context:

*6 Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats: 7 For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee. 8 The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words.* Prov. 23:6-8 KJV

The CSB renders verse 7a: "*for it's like someone calculating inwardly.*" The ESV says, "*for he is like one who is inwardly calculating.*" The NIV has it: "*for he is the kind of person who is always thinking about the cost.*"

Clearly, the proverb, in context, is a warning not to share a meal with untrustworthy people because they hide their inner devious thoughts. It has nothing to do with how we control our thoughts. We should be careful not draw concepts from scriptural passages it is not teaching.

### **4. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."**

We all recognize this sentence as the Golden Rule. It is one of the most commonly stated ethical principles taught, in one way or another, to children in just

about every culture and religion in the world. But is it actually a Biblical concept? Well, actually, it is. It is included in a discourse Jesus delivered in Luke 6 right after He gave the Beatitudes. In Luke 6:31 He says, "*Treat (or Do to) people the same way you want them to treat (or do to) you.*" (see also Matthew 7:12)

### **5. "God helps those who help themselves!"**

When I was in high school, my football coach would say to us players, "Don't forget, the Bible says, 'God helps those who help themselves!'" It sounded good and we all assumed he knew what he was saying and believed him. However, one of my friends decided to look it up in his Bible. He took out an exhaustive concordance, and as hard as he tried he could not find it. Soon he came to the conclusion it simply is not in there.

In fact, it really is not a biblical principle at all. Does God really help those who help themselves? The whole idea seems to run counter to the doctrine of grace. That is, we are actually helpless to help ourselves. We must depend entirely on God to accomplish anything worthwhile. Paul says, "*I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.*" (Philippians 4:13 NASB) And Jesus Himself said, "*I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.*" (John 15:5).

That does not mean we are to just sit back passively and do nothing. God does expect us to take action when circumstances arise. But we must not think that we can succeed by our own abilities. Our strength comes

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from Him. Perhaps the slogan should be better stated, "God helps those who need Him to help them."

### 6. "God works in mysterious ways."

How many times have you heard someone say, when something happens unexpectedly, "Well, you know, the Bible says, 'God works in mysterious ways.'" I have been studying the Bible for over fifty years, and I have never seen that written anywhere in it. Certainly God does work in our lives sometimes in ways we do not expect. But I don't think Scripture indicates He is sneaking around doing things behind our backs. He usually wants us to know that He is at work so we can give Him the glory.

### 7. If two or three people join together to pray about a certain thing, God will always grant it.

Perhaps you've been in a small Bible study group and someone will say, "Let's pray about that, remember what Jesus said, '*If two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven.*'" 20 For where two or three have

*gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.*" This is sometimes called the principle of "Prayer Triplets." You then all pray together with conviction the God is going to answer your request positively.

That is all well and good. Group prayer is powerful. However, the passage quoted above (Matthew 16:19-21) from Jesus is really not about prayer at all. It is in the context of church discipline, restoration, and forgiveness. Look at in context.

15 "Now if your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he

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*does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that ON THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY MATTER MAY BE CONFIRMED. 17 And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, he is to be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18 Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. 20 For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst." 21 Then Peter came up and said to Him, "Lord, how many times shall my brother sin against me and I still forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy-seven times. (Matthew 18:15-22 NASB)*

So yes, we can pray together with conviction. But let's not forget, God is never obliged to answer our prayers the way we want Him to no matter how many of us pray about it. We come to Him with humility asking Him to help us conform our will to His, whether we be one, three, or a hundred.

### **8. King Herod Antipas' step-daughter's name was Salome who had John the Baptist beheaded.**

Recently on a popular game show one of the questions asked was, "What was the name of King Herod Antipas' step-daughter who had her step-father, at the bequest of her mother, kill John the Baptist." The answer given was "Salome," which was indicated to be correct. The problem is, nowhere in the New Testament does it ever say what her name was. The story is found in Matthew 14:1-12:

*1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the news about Jesus, 2 and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he himself has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him." 3 For when Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. 4 For John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." 5 Although Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded John as a prophet. 6 But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod, 7 so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. 8 And after being prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter." 9 And although he was grieved, the king commanded it to be given because of his oaths and his dinner guests. 10 He sent word and had John beheaded in the prison. 11 And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. 12 John's disciples came and took away the body and buried it; and they went and reported to Jesus. (NASB - see also Mark 6:17-29)*

You will notice that neither Matthew nor Mark give her name – only calling her "the daughter of Herodias," Herod Antipas' wife. Some credit Josephus, the Jewish historian, for suggesting Salome was her name in his account of Herod Antipas. But it is unclear if he was talking about the same girl. The only woman named Salome mentioned in Scripture is one of the women who witnessed Jesus' crucifixion and went with some others to His tomb to anoint His body only to find the stone rolled away. (Mark 15:40; 16:1) She was certainly not the same person as Herod's step daughter."

### **9. "Love is the answer."**

This phrase sounds biblical as in John 15, 1 Corinthians 13, 1 John 4, and other passages. But actually it does not come from the Bible but is the title of a popular song from the 1980s written by Todd Rundgren. It was performed and was a moderate hit by the American duo England Dan and John Ford Coley. Later, in 2001, contemporary Christian singers Bob Carlisle and Bryan Duncan recorded a gospel version which got playing time on a number of Christian radio stations. Whether or not Rundgren meant it to be, the song can be interpreted to have a Christian message. Listen to it here with lyrics: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhL7\\_hqhe5k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhL7_hqhe5k)

This concludes Part 1 of this two-part series. In the next installment we will look at several more phrases and ideas that people often assume come from the Bible. We will again look at them to see if indeed they do come from Scripture, and if they do, do they mean what people think they do.