

The following excerpt is a typical explanation of *gospel centered* hermeneutics, also known as *Christocentric* and *redemptive historical hermeneutics*. The excerpt is from the writings of Robert Brinsmead and was posted on “Vossed World” (a web blog dedicated to redemptive historical hermeneutics and New Covenant Theology) to illustrate the *gospel-driven* view of Scripture. Sadly, this view of Scripture is very prevalent among proponents of Gospel Sanctification. Evangelical leaders should demand that many popular teachers of our day either affirm or reject this view of scripture. Those who affirm it should be dismissed as valid teachers, regardless of their names.

My thoughts are prefaced by brackets.

In our time, living under the law may assume the form of biblicism. Many suppose that the evangelical faith stands or falls on the matter of biblical inerrancy meaning that the very letter of Holy Scripture is without any error in everything it affirms, including theology, history, ethics, geography, biology and chronology.

[It is not simply the matter of the Bible itself being inerrant, it is a matter of believing that God has revealed Himself to mankind and had it recorded in a book by men as they were moved and guided by the Holy Spirit (2Peter 1:20,21). Furthermore, since God chose to reveal Himself in this way, it only stands to reason that He would preserve the meaning of His word (Matthew 5:18).

Plainly, the Christian faith does stand on what God has revealed about Himself and all of the implications thereof. Therefore, to a substantial degree, the Christian faith would stand on the authority and accuracy of what God has recorded about Himself.

*Moreover, not primarily in regard to the things the author mentions above, but rather what pertains to **life** and **godliness** as stated in 2Peter 1:3. This passage says we are granted His power through **knowledge** of Him. Let me also take opportunity to set up another point. Peter makes it clear that the Scriptures are sufficient for two separate things: **life** and **godliness**. This is what a so-called biblicist or scripturist believes, not the description offered above. In addition, a scripturist would not fear following the Bible for purposes of **duplicating godliness** and seeking God’s wisdom for **life**, thinking this would make him (or her) legalistic or followers of the law in order to obtain salvation and keep it].*

The great danger of biblicism is that, instead of being used solely in the service of the gospel, the Bible becomes a book of rules about many other issues.

*[The author is clearly in error here. Nowhere does it say in the Scriptures that the Bible is to be used “solely in the service of the gospel.” As a matter of fact, our verse in 2Peter clearly states the purpose of Scripture: **It’s all we need for life and godliness.** Furthermore, 2Timothy 3:16,17 gives additional information regarding the proper use of Scripture:*

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

*In addition, Matthew chapters 5 thru 7 records the first major instructional discourse by Christ Himself concerning kingdom living and says little about the **gospel**.*

Also, so-called biblicist don’t believe the bible is a “book of rules,” they believe it is what 2Peter and 2Timothy says it is; that’s why I suppose we could call ourselves “biblicist.” Our ideas about the “proper use” of scripture comes from the mouth of God and no other source (“God-breathed;” 2Timothy 3:16). Certainly, it is our final authority on what the gospel is and how to present it, but the whole Bible is not about this one aspect of knowledge concerning God. If this were the case, the Apostle Paul failed to make it clear in his writings and certainly failed to make it clear to Timothy].

Christians may become enslaved to the Bible just as the Jews became enslaved to the Torah, their Holy Scripture (John 10:34,35). Just as the Jews barricaded themselves behind the letter of the Torah to oppose Jesus, so we may easily barricade ourselves behind the letter of a supposedly inerrant Scripture to oppose the gospel's festival of freedom.

[The Jews hid behind a twisting of scripture, not Scripture itself. And by the way, it was primarily the Pharisees that did this and not the Jews in general. They were guilty of twisting the word of God into their traditions:

“Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, ‘Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!’ Jesus replied, ‘And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?’ For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’ and ‘Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death. But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,’ he is not to ‘honor his father’ with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men’ (Matthew 15:1-9).

Obedying God's instruction in regard to kingdom living as documented in the Bible is not an issue of biblicism. A true biblicist does not twist the Scriptures into traditions and rules made up by men.

*Furthermore, as Christians, it is not our goal to partake in a "festival of freedom," **It is our goal to please him** (2Corinthians 5:9). In the process it may be festive or it may not be festive (John 21:18-19). Though freedom in Christ is important to the biblicist, his main goal is to please Christ and the God-breathed Scriptures are the guide for that endeavor].*

There can be a false faith in the bible. In the proper spiritual sense faith is an act of real worship which should be rendered solely to the Creator (John 9:35-38).

[John 9:35-38 is an account of a man who worshipped Christ when He was here in person. This does not mean that worshipping Christ according to what the Bible says in the absence of the physical Christ is synonymous with bowing down and worshipping a book of stone. The reading of the word will often incite us to worship Christ in spirit and truth (John 4:23) for "your word is truth" (John 17:17). In addition, nowhere does the Bible present a prescription for worshipping Christ as a person apart from His truth because He is no longer here in physical form. To the contrary, if we love Him, we will keep His commandments].

**Saving faith is not faith in the Bible (for even the Christ-denying Pharisees trusted in the Bible John 5:39) but faith in Jesus (Rom. 3:22-26). Saving faith comes from the word of God: Romans 10:17
So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.**

[Faith does come from (faith and belief in) God's word, and it just so happens that it is documented in Bibles. Here, the author attempts to make a distinction between "the word of Christ" and the words written in the Bible. So, does faith come from the leather and paper of a bible? Of course not, but it does come from the words written in the Bible when heard by individuals along with the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, in John 5:39, Jesus is referring to an erroneous assessment of Scripture, not Scripture itself. Jesus was referring to a twisting and misuse of Scripture that did not include a proper view of their Messiah. This would seem somewhat obvious, especially in context].

While Catholics have been particularly susceptible to ecclesiology -- the worship of the church -- Protestants have been disposed toward bibliolatry -- the worship of the Bible.

*[Making the Bible a **light unto our path** (Psalm 119:105), is not worshipping what God says apart from who God is. If we love him, we will keep his commandments (John 14:15).*

The purpose of all Scripture is to bear witness to Christ (John 5:39; 20:31).

*[Gospel centered proponents often cite Scriptures like John 5:39 to make the case that **all** Scripture is about Christ with the added and supposed synonym **gospel** in every verse and contextual meaning. In this verse and many others like it, Christ is saying that individuals of that time failed to see His role in making salvation possible as explained and proclaimed in Scripture. In the mind of a so-called biblicist, His instruction for living a life pleasing to the Father, and elements of discipleship (Matthew 28:19,20), cannot be excluded or exchanged for a nebulous worship of Christ's personhood (whatever exactly that means anyway)].*

The Bible in itself is not the Word of God. The Word of God is a person (John 1:1).

*[Regardless, until God speaks, man has no life line to God (John 6:63, Matthew 4:4). Jesus said we are "**sanctified**" by truth and that God's **word** is truth [John 17:17]. That truth, and those words are to be found in what we call the Bible. They are the words of God written and documented in books by chosen men as they were borne along by the Holy Spirit Himself. The Bible has a word for that: **Scripture**. Scripture is the **recognized book form** of GOD'S BREATH (2 Timothy 3:16). This (Brinsmead's thesis) is a witless devaluation of a book written by the Holy Spirit to **fully** equip God's people for **every good work**.*

*I will pause here to ask a question that could be asked because of hundreds of other Bible verses: If God's word was only for the purpose of equipping God's people for the **gospel**, why wouldn't Paul plainly say that instead of **every good work**? The gospel is a singular concept; **every good work** clearly implies a multiplicity of instruction. If they are all encompassed within the gospel why wouldn't Paul plainly state it accordingly?*

This particular statement by Brinsmead ("The Bible in itself is not the Word of God. The Word of God is a person") should be an acid test for every pastor of our day. All of those who agree with it should be thrown out of the ministry in posthaste.]

Neither does the Bible have life, power or light in itself any more than did the Jewish Torah. These attributes may be ascribed to the Bible only by virtue of its relationship to Him who is Word, Life, Power and Light. Life is not in the book, as the Pharisees supposed, but only in the Man of the book (John 5:39).

*[Again, we are not merely talking about the "Bible," 2 Timothy 3:15 calls it (the Bible) the **sacred writings**. In fact, the problem with the Pharisees was*

*not that they saw the power of God in the Bible, **it was the exact opposite, they could not see the power of God because they were in error concerning the Scriptures** (Matthew 22:29, Mark 12:24). Also, Peter considered the Scriptures a better testimony than the display of Christ's glory and power at the transfiguration (2Peter1:16-20). If Peter said that the written word is a **more sure** testimony than the power, life, light and majesty that he witnessed firsthand concerning Christ at the transfiguration, what does that say about this author's attitude toward the written word? Again, this is another statement by Brinsmead that should disqualify any pastor or teacher who is in agreement with it.]*

The Bible is therefore to be valued because of its testimony to Jesus Christ. The Bible is absolutely trustworthy and reliable for the purpose it was given.

[The author here says that the Bible is only valued and reliable when it speaks of Christ and His gospel. He also says that it was only given for that purpose. Of course Christ is very central to redemptive history and the Bible. But yet as anyone would agree, baptism is a very significant representation of the gospel. Christ Himself says to do so in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). The gospel is just as much about the other two members of the Trinity as it is Christ. Without God, there is no election. Without the Holy Spirit, there is no new birth or sanctification (John ch.3)].

Christ also said that His word is a teaching manual for discipleship (Matthew 28:20). Once again, here is another verse of scripture where the Holy Spirit has opportunity to say all Scripture is about the gospel rather than, "teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded".

It is designed to make us "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15), not wise on such subjects as science, history and geography, which it is our responsibility to learn through general revelation.

[The author does not quote the next verse that continues the line of thought to include other items besides the gospel:

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2Timothy 3:16).

So, besides the gospel, it is a God-breathed manual for "training in righteousness" as well. Maybe better said: a manual for learning how to love God (John 14:21, Luke 10:27)].

"That which makes the Bible the Bible is the gospel. That which makes the Bible the Word of God is its witness to Christ. When the Spirit bears witness to our hearts of the truth of the Bible, this is an internal witness concerning the truth of the gospel. We need to be apprehended by the Spirit, who lives in the gospel, and then judge all things by that Spirit even the letter of Scripture.

[His explanation of a hermeneutic that makes the written word a person might be helpful. The above statement clearly exchanges the objective, written word of God for a nebulous "apprehension of the Spirit who 'lives' in the gospel." This obviously exchanges objective truth for mysticism].

"...Christian biblicism is no different from Jewish legalism. It is the old way of the letter, not the new way of the Spirit (Rom. 7:6). Jesus and Paul declare that apart from the Spirit we cannot understand the truth (John 16:13; I Cor. 2:14). This means that unless we are caught up in the Spirit of the gospel, we cannot understand or use the Bible correctly. Apart from the gospel the Bible is letter (gramma), not Spirit (pneuma). "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (II Cor. 3:6,17)." -- Robert Brinsmead.

[The last paragraph of the quote simply says that the Spirit only illuminates the word when the word is seen through the lens of the gospel. But this is not what Jesus said concerning His problem with the legalist crowd. He said: "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures." Once again, why would He not have said: "You are in error because you do not know the gospel"? Jesus and Paul did not put the same emphasis on a gospel prism. As a matter of fact, if they had one, where is it? This is obvious by its conspicuous absence in regard to the teachings of both Jesus and Paul, especially if it has a preeminence claimed by gospel centered advocates.

Furthermore, for all practical purposes, the author is saying that using the Bible for instruction, as well as the other uses Paul communicated to Timothy, is a use of Scripture apart from the working of the Holy Spirit. I think the logical conclusion of this speaks for its self. It will lead to Quietism at best, and antinomianism at worst, and perhaps both.

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