

# What If Your Pastor Is Wrong?

**W**hen my wife and I were in our twenties, we were attending a Young Married's Sunday School class at our church. The teacher of the class was Dr. James Roscup, a professor then at Talbot Seminary. I will never forget that dear man. We were thrilled to have him teaching us each Sunday. He was warm and a great teacher. We were attending the Church of the Door then in downtown Los Angeles. Our pastor was Dr. J. Vernon McGee. As a result, our Lord used them to help us learn the Bible and to grow spiritually.

**Then I Was In Grief.** One day a man and his wife started attending our Young Married's class. As the Sundays went by, that couple, my wife, and I slowly become friends. That is the way friendship usually develops. Soon I noticed that he was very knowledgeable about the Bible and theology. He was not like the arrogant men we sometimes encounter. He was a humble man whom

God had gifted with a great amount of biblical knowledge. I soon learned that he knew more about the Bible than I did. Eventually, the Holy Spirit convicted me and I felt guilty that I knew so very little about the Bible. He was not a pastor. He had not gone to a Bible College or attended a seminary. But I had attended a Christian college and knew less of the Bible than he did.

Soon I realized that the little that I knew about the Bible came from my parents, my professors at BIOLA, my pastor, and our Sunday School teacher. But my new friend knew

the Bible because he had been faithfully studying it. He had books about the Bible in his library. I do not mean Christian novels or books about how to be a happy Christian, or have a successful marriage. He had serious books, Bible commentaries by trustworthy authors. He owned systematic theologies. He wanted to understand everything that God had said in the Bible. One day I told my wife that if someone asked me a question about the Bible I would probably tell the person what my pastor said, or encourage the person to ask my pastor. I did not know where to find verses about salvation except for John 3:16, eternal life, hell, or eternal security.



Then I was in grief when I realized that if my pastor was wrong about salvation, I would not know it. If he was wrong, I could go to hell and not heaven! At that moment, I was in agony! I am sad to say that many believers are in the same situation as I was that day.

**Like A Bowl of Raisin Bran.** I find that many believers pick up their mobile phone or go to their computer and search for Bible answers. They click on different links and look for some short, quick answer. They do not want to read very much. They are in a hurry. Some websites do not supply verses or they just refer to them. Readers often do not look them up. They trust the author. Maybe they do read the Scriptures in the article. If it sounds biblical, then it must be biblical. But that is how cults gain followers. Often, they look for someone with whom they will agree. At NeverThirsty, we

have found some visitors to the website just read the titles, subtitles, or captions. They guess at what they think we have written. That becomes obvious when they leave a comment on our Facebook page or send us an email. When we read their comments, it is obvious they only read the title of the study or the caption to glean what they think the study is about. Is that the way to determine truth?

It is amazing what one can find on the internet. Unbelievers, the cults, pseudo-intellectual professors, anti-Bible critics, and the biblically uneducated are posting fiction and half-lies about the Bible on the internet. Sadly, some professing Christians believe that St. Peter will meet them at heaven's gate and ask them a few questions. If they have the right answers, then Peter will let them through the pearly gate. Or, some believe that angels will be waiting to greet them when they go to heaven. But the Bible does not teach that St. Peter or angels are standing at the gates into heaven. In fact, the Bible does not even discuss passing through gates when we arrive in heaven. But some pastors teach that. Just check the internet. heaven. But some pastors teach that. Just check the internet.

The internet is like a bowl of raisin bran, where false teaching is like all of the many bran flakes, and the websites that teach truth remind me of the raisins. Sadly, too many professing believers are satisfied with the little bran flakes. No wonder so many believers have a very weak understanding or knowledge of the Bible; consequently, they only have a weak understanding of God Himself. But that is a good description of how I learned the Bible in my early years. I listened to Dr. McGee or Dr. Rosscup on Sunday. Then I settled for 10-15 minutes of devotions. That was my Bible study! I had checked that box on my list of things to do! Surely God was happy with me. But you could not have asked me to explain if Christians lost their salvation or were eternally secure. I had to trust my pastor for that one!

**Truth By The Majority.** Now asking your pastor is a good place to start because pastors can be very helpful. But what if a pastor has not been diligently studying the Bible? Some pastors have even eventually become apostates and have left the faith. Some pastors, I am sorry to say, are lazy and do not study the Bible faithfully. I know one pastor who

told me that theology was boring. I was shocked! Since theology is the study of or about God, does that mean he found learning about God to be boring? Just because a man went to seminary does not mean he graduated with honors. Maybe he was not faithful in his studies. Maybe he did not or does not have a vibrant relationship with God. If so, he should not be a pastor. So, should you depend upon your pastor as your only source of truth?

Some professing believers determine truth by how many people hold the same opinion or understanding. We call it truth by majority vote. Surely the majority opinion must be correct. The proof that approach is wrong is that the New Testament books by Paul, James, Peter, Jude, and John are filled with rebukes about false teachers and their false teaching. False teaching is still occurring today both on the internet and in some books offered in Christian bookstores.

**I Delight In These Things.** So, what is your source of truth? I hope it is the Bible and not the "bran flakes" on the internet. I hope you check out everything you believe against what the Bible says. Because God Himself wrote the Bible. 2 Peter 1:20-21 says,

**But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. 2 Peter 1:20-21 (NASB)**

These two verses tell us the Holy Spirit wrote the Bible by moving men to write what He wanted them to write. What was written was written by the Holy Spirit as He moved men to write. Then the Holy Spirit helps us understand it. 1 Timothy 3:16-17 teaches a simple truth. God wrote all of the Bible.

**All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NASB)**

What is my point? I urge you to study the Bible and know

the truth contained in it. The internet can be helpful, but you need to carefully watch out for "bran flakes." God promises us blessing if we will faithfully study the Bible. In Acts 17:10-11, we are told the believers in Berea were more noble than those in Thessalonica because they studied the Scriptures daily. Check out the verse and think about what it says. But do not miss the fact that God praised the people in the Berean church for daily studying the Scriptures. They checked to determine if the apostle Paul taught truth.

God tells us that we are blessed when we study the Bible. In 1 John 1:4 we are told we receive joy. Revelation 1:3 says we are blessed. Also, Jeremiah 29:12-13 reveals that God wants us to search for Him with all our hearts.

*Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:12-13 (NASB)*

That is what we do to become believers, but God does not want our searching to stop there. He wants us to continue searching. Jeremiah 9:23-24 says,

*Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD. Jeremiah 9:23-24 (NASB)*

This passage reveals God's heart. He wants us to desire to know Him. He wants us to search for Him in the pages of the Bible and learn everything that we can.

So, I want to encourage you to find a good Bible that will help you study the Bible. I want to encourage you to learn how to study the Bible. I would urge you to invest in biblically solid books. Then study and study (1 Peter 2:1-2). I want to encourage you to read through the series, "[How To Study the Bible](#)." I would also encourage you to download the guide "[850 Books for Biblical Expositors](#)." It will help you to find

books you can trust.

So, what if your pastor is wrong? Then you may also be wrong about the truth of Scripture! I hope you are like the Bereans. Listen to your pastor, visit biblically solid websites, buy biblically based Christian study books and compare everything with what you read in the Bible. Become a man or woman who desires to know God and what He wrote!