

## HOW TO VIEW THE BIBLE (2)

A. **God's warnings** are widely ignored, even among those who call themselves Christians.

1. People don't like to hear the warnings, only the subjects they perceive to be useful to them.
2. This fact is no more evident than in God's warning regarding apostasy.

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**Thayer** – Apostasia: a falling away, defection, from the true religion: Acts 21:21; 2 Thess 2:3; (Josh 22:22; 2 Chron 29:19; 33:19) **Freiberg** – a condition resulting from changing loyalties (Jer 2:19) revolt, desertion; as a religious technical term; (1) rebellion (2 Thess 2.3); (2) defection, abandonment (Acts 21:21)

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B. **Paul spoke of apostasy** as a very real & forthcoming occurrence in the church (2 Thess 2:1-4; Acts 20:25-32).

1. The spirit of apostasy can be seen in one's attitude toward preaching God's Word (2 Tim 4:1-4).

[We have to be very careful today, because what so many people call “preaching God's Word” has the effect of deceiving people (Rom 16:17-18; Jer 12:6).

People can actually desire to hear preaching from the Bible & be falling or running away from God: if they don't rightly divide it (handle it accurately) or if they don't want to hear & apply all of it (to their situation or their beliefs).]

I. THE BIBLE IS THE PERFECT REVELATION FROM THE PERFECT GOD

II. JESUS: THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF HOW TO HANDLE THE PERFECT REVELATION

[Paul stated “there must be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you” (1 Cor 11:19). The major divisions in the church over the past two centuries (written creeds, missionary societies, instrumental music, institutionalism: church support of colleges & benevolent agencies, sponsoring churches, etc.) have been over a failure to understand & properly apply the authoritative word of God. We have new Christians among us, & the rest of us also need to be reminded where we are, currently, in the spiritual warfare to “contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3; cf. 1 Sam 17).]

### III. ATTITUDES AND ARGUMENTS OF THOSE WHO REJECT THE LIMITS OF GOD'S AUTHORITY

A. **Some boldly claim** that we don't need authority for everything we do in our service to God, & in the work of a local church?

1. They attribute the whole idea of demanding divine authority as coming from men.
2. They refer to those of us who do demand NT authority as being legalistic or Pharisaical.

B. **There are other terms** circulating that I would like for us to be aware of; terms that don't have as sharp an edge as (legalist, traditionalist or Pharisee).

#### 1. "Patternist"

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It is time to admit that in our churches, **a wide variety of people from all walks of life simply do not find patternism & legalism to be meaningful themes.** (Dr. Richard Hughes, Reclaiming a Heritage; Reflections on the Heart, Soul & Future of Churches of Christ, p. 121)

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a. In the Bible, the word "pattern" is equivalent to God's authoritative word.

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**Heb 8:3-6** – For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts & sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. 4 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; 5 who serve the copy & shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. **For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."** 6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

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b. How could it be deemed legalistic to place importance on every Word of God?

c. How could you be a mere "patternist" to strive as best you can to understand His Word & to make the proper application of what we learn?

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**Matt 4:1-4** – Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And when He had fasted forty days & forty nights, afterward He was hungry. 3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.” 4 But He answered & said, **“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”**

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[If we are misapplying the Scripture in our work together, then we should be open to study that matter so that it may be corrected. But it is not just to label a Christian or a congregation that simply desires to follow the NT pattern.]

## 2. “Propositional Baconian”

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What has become sad is that current day CENlist deny the origins of their logician hermeneutic. D. R. Dungan gladly praised the origins of his hermeneutical method & quoted Bacon in his book on hermeneutics. Dungan wrote, “Bacon, to whom we are largely, if not wholly, indebted for this method of philosophy” (p. 82). **According to Dungan, the purpose of the inductive method is to report all the facts, “and from them the conclusion is to be reached”** (Discussion with a Christian Church Preacher, p. 83)

**Francis Bacon, 1st Viscount St Alban, [KC](#)** (22 January 1561 – 9 April 1626), son of [Nicholas Bacon](#) by his second wife [Anne \(Cooke\) Bacon](#), was an [English philosopher, statesman, scientist, lawyer, jurist, & author](#). He served both as [Attorney General](#) & [Lord Chancellor](#) of England. Although his political career ended in disgrace, he remained extremely influential through his works, especially as philosophical advocate & practitioner of the [scientific revolution](#). His dedication brought him into a rare historical group of scientists who were killed by their own experiments. **His works established &**

**popularized an inductive methodology for [scientific inquiry](#), often called the [Baconian method](#) or simply, the [scientific method](#).** His demand for a planned procedure of investigating all things natural marked a new turn in the rhetorical & theoretical framework for science, much of which still surrounds conceptions of proper [methodology](#) today. Bacon was knighted in 1603, created Baron Verulam in 1618, & Viscount St Alban in 1621; as he died without heirs both [peerages](#) became extinct upon his death.

**Scientific method** refers to a body of techniques for investigating phenomena, acquiring new knowledge, or correcting & integrating previous knowledge. To be termed scientific, a method of inquiry must be based on gathering observable, empirical & measurable evidence subject to specific principles of reasoning.[1] **A scientific method consists of the collection of data through observation & experimentation, & the formulation & testing of hypotheses.**[2]

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- a. This kind of reasoning from scripture existed long before Francis Bacon; what doctrine does not involve logic & application?

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**John 7:16-18** – Jesus answered them & said, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. 17 **If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.** 18 He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, & no unrighteousness is in Him.

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## 3. “CENI Hermeneutic”

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Why does CENI consistently distort narratives, poetry, parables, doxologies, psalms, wisdom, personal correspondence, beatitudes, etc. into one monotonous invective? Why would any conscientious “common sense” Christian allow such distortions to go unchallenged? (Discussion with a Christian Church Preacher)

Pattern puzzle pieces come in three shapes, according to Church of Christ pattern-seekers. Each piece bears the form either of an express command (“C”), an approved example (“E”), or a necessary inference (“NI”). But the picture on the completed puzzle is surrounded on four sides with a very thick border. **According to the pattern-seekers, this means that every detail of church structure, worship, leadership, & ministry must be “authorized” by one of those puzzle pieces, or else it is unlawful.**

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- a. Does the Bible approve of following examples & drawing inferences?

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**1 Cor 11:1 – Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.**

**Phil 4:9 – The things which you learned & received & heard & saw in me, these do, & the God of peace will be with you.**

**Mark 12:23-27** – Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife.” 24 Jesus answered & said to them, “Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God? 25 For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 26 **But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, & the God of Jacob’?** 27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken.”

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#### 4. “The Bible should only be read as a narrative.”

- a. Some believe that all preaching from the Bible should be expository.

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**We should only preach expository sermons...treat the Bible as a narrative that tells the story of God’s mighty deeds** on behalf of the world which he created, which he seeks to redeem & over which he someday will triumph when his rule is complete. (R. Hughes, Reclaiming a Heritage, p. 186)

**I believe we should go back to the Bible free of any shackles of doctrinal issues of churches of Christ & just read it as a story** (which is what it is). Not seeking to find justification or argumentation over some preconceived notion about righteousness, holiness, patterns, etc. But, reading it as a Christological document (see the Art of Reading Scripture), I think we will be greatly enriched & many of our rigid rules will become more nuanced & refreshed. We may even drop some rules; & we may actually add some depth of commitment to the call to discipleship. As we do that & as we begin to glean the true intent of this story & reinvestigate the real meaning of various contexts that have dominated us. In our issues we will have done ourselves a great favor. We will not be propositional Baconians, nor will we be relativist postmoderns (though, to one degree or another, we will miss some points & probably lean in one or both of those directions at different times in specific instances). But, we will be Bible storytellers (From a preacher in a non-institutional church).

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- b. Reading without personal application is vain!

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**Heb 5:12-14** – For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; & you have come to need milk & not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good & evil.

**Acts 20:32** – So now, brethren, *I commend you to God & to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up &* give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

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**CLOSING:** Let's gain experience in dealing with & solving problems God's way. Let's Be prepared to deal with the trends within the religious world.