

“Chimney Corner Scriptures”

by Bill Crews

Many phrases, expressions and statements that were originated by men are mistakenly attributed to the Bible. Some of them have a “Bible-sounding tone” to them. These have been commonly referred to as “chimney–corner scriptures.”

A sampling of these are:

- ▶ “When Gabriel blows his horn.”
- ▶ “Saint Peter at the golden gate.” (Heaven has gates of pearl, and Peter will **not** be in charge of who enters heaven.)
- ▶ “Cleanliness is next to godliness.” (But physical cleanliness is a wise practice.)
- ▶ “An idle mind is the devil’s workshop.” (But surely an idle mind is a good opportunity for the devil.)
- ▶ “Spare the rod and spoil the child.” (But the Bible does state that one who spares the rod hates his or her child.)
- ▶ “God moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.” (But the Bible does teach that man cannot know the ways of God until God reveals them.)
- ▶ “God helps those who help themselves.”
- ▶ “Confession is good for the soul.”

An old gentleman in a nursing home, learning that I was a preacher, asked me where in the Bible it says “something like, ‘He found forgiveness between the stirrup and the ground.’” (He had heard some preacher claim that was how Saul of Tarsus was saved when, upon seeing the light and hearing the voice of the Lord, he fell off of his white horse. The Bible says nothing about how Saul and companions traveled to Damascus from Jerusalem, and he wasn’t saved until he did what he was told to do by Ananias in Damascus.)

A neighbor lady asked me where in the Bible she could find the statement, “The very hairs of your head are all numbered” (which is in **Matthew 10:30–BC**), as are the days of your life” (which isn’t said or implied anywhere in the Bible).

One of my medical doctors once remarked, “As the Psalmist said, ‘When the salt has lost its savor.’” He had a Bible statement, but it was made by Jesus, not a psalmist.

Representative Guy Vander Jagt, then of Michigan, delivered the keynote address at the 1980 GOP convention. In it he said, “But Proverbs tells us that the road to hell is paved with good intentions” (but it doesn’t, nor does the Bible in any other book, and the GOP had mailed out printed copies of the speech).

So many people believe that the Bible plainly teaches that everyone is born into this world lost and separated from God, that we are saved by faith alone, that all one must do to be saved is to accept Christ in his heart as his personal Savior, that once saved always saved, that it does not matter what doctrines you believe or what church you belong to as long as you are honest and sincere, that all churches are good and that there are saved people in all churches and saved people out of all churches, that if you are lost and out of Christ, you can just pray to God for salvation and receive it, that it doesn’t matter how you worship God as long as your heart is in your worship.

But these things are no more in the Bible than are the above “chimney–corner Scriptures.”

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