

## Theology vs. Text

The Bible is not too difficult to understand. Many depend on "scholars" or preachers to tell them what it means rather than studying it themselves and accepting what the text says. However, rarely do scholars and preachers totally agree on any one point. Usually, their interpretations are shaped by a theological paradigm through which they read the text. If text and theology conflict, they may twist the text to say something it obviously does not say, reduce it to something less than Scripture, or, rarely, change their theology.

For example, one belief system teaches a man is justified by faith alone and not by works, while James 2:24 clearly states, "a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone." Another teaches once a man is saved he can never fall away from God's saving grace, regardless of clear warnings concerning exactly that possibility in Hebrews 6:4-6, 10:26-29, Galatians 5:4, et al.

The new birth is effected by the word of God alone (1Peter 1:23), not theological belief systems constructed in the minds of well meaning—but fallible—men. Which is it, another man's theology or God's word?