

Faith Is a Persuasion, Not a Decision

At Northeast Bible Chapel, Colorado Springs, CO

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INTRODUCTION

AN ILLUSTRATION OF HOW PERSUASION OCCURS from *Twelve Angry Men*

This is an illustration. That is all that is claimed for the movie clip.

Summary of the portion of the film prior to the clip we will see:

The movie considers a jury's deliberations one sweltering evening in New York City to determine whether a son stabbed his father to death. The initial ballot was eleven *Guilty* and one *Not Guilty*. The eleven thought that the prosecutor had removed reasonable doubt. Gradually, over the next several hours the ballot reached three *Guilty* and nine *Not Guilty*.

The jury seemed hopelessly deadlocked. Then Juror 8 (Henry Fonda) urged the three who voted *Guilty* to persuade the nine. Juror 4 (E.G. Marshall) argued eloquently and persuasively, initially leaving Juror 8 (Henry Fonda) and Juror 9 (the old man) speechless. Juror 12 (who vacillated easily) did his usual flip-flop, so it was now 8 not guilty to 4 guilty).

However, Juror 9 (the old man) asserted that both Juror 4 (E.G. Marshall) and the prosecutor's star witness seemed to have eyeglasses that irritated their noses (so they rubbed their noses). The resulting discussion caused eleven of the jurors to discount the witness' ability to see as clearly as she had claimed [Although not likely to have been wearing glasses as she lifted her head from the pillow, she claimed to be able to identify the murderer from 50 feet away while looking through the windows of a passing light-rail train].

Another ballot was taken. Eleven voted not guilty, because of reasonable doubt. At this point that Juror 3 (Lee J. Cobb) seeks to persuade the eleven.

BIBLICAL TEACHING ON PERSUASION

2 Corinthians 4:3ff.

Satan would not veil a man who had no eyes. If he did, it would not be a problem.

Paul compares believing to seeing (after light penetrates the veil)

Acts 28:24

A Some <u>were persuaded by</u> the things that were spoken	B Others <u>disbelieved</u> the things that were spoken
C Some <u>believed</u> the things that were spoken	D Others <u>were not persuaded</u> the things that were spoken

A equals C
B equals D

being persuaded = believing
disbelieving = not being persuaded

A is the opposite of B
A is the opposite of D

being persuaded is the opposite of disbelieving
being persuaded is the opposite of not being persuaded

C is the opposite of B
C is the opposite of D

believing is the opposite of disbelieving
not being persuaded is the opposite of not being persuaded

Romans 4:4–5

Wages are a debt incurred by an employer. Wages are not a gift.

Believing is not a work, so it incurs no debt. Believers receive life as a gift, not a debt.

Why isn't believing a work we do? Answer: God does the work in persuading,
just as the sun does the work in shining,
but we see its light.

Just as one lighting a firecracker does work,
but we see, hear, and feel the explosion.

John 6:28–29

What does *This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent* mean?

Does it mean that believing is the work that a believer does for God?

If so, this would contradict Romans 4:4–5 and Ephesians 2:8–9

Does it mean that persuading is the work that God does?

The following paraphrase of 6:29 may help

This is the working of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent*

Both the Father and the Son worked in doing the signs.
John says that purpose of working the signs was
that people would believe

The Father and the Son worked signs to persuade people
Persuading is God's work

CONCLUSION

*Participles (like *working* or *worked*) have voice, but idea words (like *work*) leave voice implicit. My rendering This is God's working clarifies my view that God is in the business of persuading. It does not mean that people do not resist His persuasion (as in John 6). Persuasion can be resisted, but God continues using truth to persuade and draw.