

CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE ALIKE?

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Men may misunderstand the Bible in as many different ways as there are people to read it. But God did not intend such misunderstanding. In matters of obligation to God, all men must be in total agreement. Jesus said, "HE THAT REJECTETH ME, AND RECEIVETH NOT MY WORDS, HATH ONE THAT JUDGETH HIM: THE WORD THAT I HAVE SPOKEN, THE SAME SHALL JUDGE HIM IN THE LAST DAY" (**John 12:48**). The Word of God will read that exact same way on the Day of Judgment as it does now and vice versa.

All mentally capable people can (are able to) understand, but they do not do so. It is obvious, therefore, that there is a difference between *can* and *do*. Actually, the question should be; "Can we understand the Bible?" When we understand, we will be alike. Paul made this clear to the Ephesians when he wrote, "HOW, THAT BY REVELATION HE MADE KNOWN UNTO ME THE MYSTERY; (AS I WROTE AFORE IN FEW WORDS, WHEREBY, WHEN YE READ, YE MAY UNDERSTAND MY KNOWLEDGE IN THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST)" (**Ephesians 3:3-4**; also see **I Timothy 3:14**; **Acts 17:11**; **John 5:39**).

When men orally or in written form, teach that men cannot "understand the Bible alike," they are writing for one reason—to bring about **understanding** on the part of their audience. But what do they expect of their audience? They want every one to understand alike that "not everyone cannot understand the Bible alike." We shall not belabor such nonsense.

Seeing it is not God's fault, why do people misunderstand the Bible? The answer is not far from any of us. Please note the following simple prerequisite to the understanding of the scriptures----"AN HONEST AND GOOD HEART" (**Luke 8:15**). In this parable the Word of God is said to be the "SEED OF THE KINGDOM" (**v.11**.) It did not change as it was sown "BY THE WAYSIDE "ON THE ROCK," "AMONG THORNS," or "ON THE GOOD GROUND" (**vv. 5-8**). The first three places the seed fell represent dishonest hearts; they were not good because they were not honest.

Before one is going to "HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS" and thereby "BE FILLED" (**Matthew 5:6**), there must be the integrity of heart (intellect, will, conscience, and emotions). Jesus said, "IF ANY MAN WILLETH TO DO HIS WILL, HE SHALL KNOW OF THE TEACHING" (**John 7:17**). Seeking the Truth for merely academic reasons will not bring understanding. There must be the will to comply with what is learned before full understanding is possible.

Jesus spoke of those who **did** not understand because they **would** not. Jesus said that their hearts had "WAXED GROSS." They had lost their honesty because of idols in their hearts. Such idols were more important to them than understanding God's Truth (**Matthew 13:13-15**).

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Paul further emphasized this principle regarding the departure of the Gentiles from God. He wrote: "BECAUSE THAT, KNOWING GOD, THEY GLORIFIED HIM NOT AS GOD, NEITHER GAVE THANKS; BUT BECAME VAIN IN THEIR REASONINGS, AND THEIR SENSE LESS HEART WAS DARKENED" (**Romans 1:21**). The heart that does not expend its energies in glorifying God by obeying His will, will slowly but surely lose whatever knowledge of God it ever had. The heart kept honest cannot fall into this trap. The "REPROBATE MIND" of **Romans 3:28** is a direct result of a dishonest heart. Also consider **Hebrews 5:11-14**.

In **2 Thessalonians 2:10-12** Paul tells of those who do not have a "LOVE OF THE TRUTH" and who "HAD PLEASURE IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS." Such will never understand Gods Truth. Integrity of the heart will prevent this from happening.

Why do people persist in misunderstanding, though they have been exposed to the Truth? Surely this study of God's Word gives us the answer as to why such is done and what we must do to continue to understand Gods will for our lives. The writer of Proverbs penned: "BUT THE PATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS IS AS THE DAWNING LIGHT, THAT SHINETH MORE AND MORE UNTO THE PERFECT DAY" (**Proverbs 4:18**). He also wrote: "KEEP THY HEART WITH ALL DILIGENCE; FOR OUT OF IT ARE THE ISSUES OF LIFE" (**Proverbs 4:23**)

The people who understand the Scriptures as they relate to our salvation will believe and practice the same things. The dishonest heart will not understand and will set about to justify itself with such nonsense as: "We cannot understand the Bible alike."

People can be honestly and sincerely wrong, but that honesty will not let them be happy and content in their error. It will drive them toward the Truth. Having confronted the Truth, one of two things must be given up. In order to keep one's honesty, truth will take the place of error regardless of the cost. But if in coming to the Truth, the error is found to be more comfortable, error will remain to the exclusion of Truth, honesty, and sincerity. The heart thereby is darkened.

Our understanding or misunderstanding of Gods saving Truth is directly related to an honest or dishonest heart. Yea, verily, we are totally responsible for what we believe and practice.