

Can We Understand The Bible Alike?

Ephesians 5:17 says, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." For many years denominational people have viewed doctrine as a matter of opinion, saying, "We just cannot all see it alike." Now members of the church of Christ have started to sing this old tune. The New Testament plea for unity stands in direct contradiction to this opinion. Prayers are heard over radio and television, "Lord, we thank you that we have the church of our choice." Yet, Jesus prayed, "that they all might be one" (John 17:21). So we are going to ask the question, "Can we all understand the Bible alike?"

Do people misunderstand the Bible? There is division over what people think the Bible teaches, e.g. ask different preachers, "What must I do to be saved?" But ultimately all division does is prove misunderstanding. Truth is consistent, i.e. it never contradicts itself. This is axiomatic, a self-evident truth. Truth is like parallel lines. Parallel lines may be extended to infinity, and they will never intersect. When we hear a man contradict himself, we know he is wrong somewhere. That is why consistency is all-important.

The Bible is truth (John 17:17). Therefore, the Bible is consistent, i.e. it never contradicts itself. Ponder this application of conclusion. If we understand the Bible at all, it will be alike (1 Corinthians 1:10). If I were to say of a man, "he says one thing to me and something different to you." I would be calling him a liar. What does this make of God, when one says of His word, "It says something to me and something different to you?" If we accept conflicting answers, someone is wrong (1 Timothy 6:3-5). It is not a matter of personal interpretation. We must speak as the "oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11).

Can we understand the Bible? Is the Bible an understandable book? If it is not, either God could but would not allow it to be understood, or He would but could not allow it to be understood. Which one will you pick? Neither one is very attractive, is it? The fact is, God wants us to understand (1 Timothy 2:3-4). He revealed an understandable plan (Ephesians 3:1-6).

Is man capable of understanding the Bible? The Lord and Paul thought so (John 6:44-45; Ephesians 5:17). Is this conclusion different today? God's teaching is unchanged (1 Peter 1:24-25) and man's nature is unchanged (Ecclesiastes 1:9-10). It is primarily a matter of attitude (Matthew 13:13-15). Acts 28:26-27 says, "Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

Yes, we can understand the Bible alike (Ephesians 5:17). How wonderful it would be if we would all heed the admonition to speak as the "oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11).

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