

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

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Our Misunderstood Bible

2Timothy 3:16-17

The Bible is the world's most popular book. It continues to be the best selling book in the world. No other book has had greater influence or touched the lives of more people.

"In all my perplexities and distresses, the bible has never failed to give me light and strength." Robert G. Lee

"The Bible is no mere book, but a living power that conquers all that oppose it."

Napoleon Bonaparte

"The existence of the bible as a book for the people is the greatest benefit which the human race has ever experienced." Immanuel Kant (not known for religion)

Unfortunately, however, it is also the most misunderstood book in the world. A number of years ago, an unknown poet penned the following words:

How Readest Thou?

Tis one thing friend, to read the bible through, another thing to read to learn to do.

Tis one thing, too, to read it with delight, and quite another to read it right.

Some read it with design to learn to read, but to the subject pay little heed.

Some read it as their duty once a week, but no instruction from the Bible seek.

Some read to being themselves into repute, by showing others how thy can dispute.

While others read because their neighbors do, to see how long twill take to read it through.

Some read the blessed book they know not why, it sometimes happens in the way to lie.

While others read it with uncommon care, but all to find some contradiction there.

One reads with father's specks upon his head, and sees the things just as his father did.

Another reads through Luther, Wesley, Scott, and thinks it means just what they thought.

Some read to prove a pre-adopted creed, thus understanding little that they read;

And every passage in the book they bend, to make it suit that all-important end.

Some people read, as I have often thought, to teach the book, instead of being taught.

How true.

I. Many People Misunderstand The Whole Bible.

1. The Source: They think it human rather than divine. A good book, but no more. A book of values and principles, but not to be strictly followed.

2Tim.3:16 "All scripture is given by the inspiration of God..." 2 Peter 1:21 "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they

were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

2. Purpose: They think it is a fable. A collection of stories, most of which are literally untrue. In 2Tim.3:16 Paul tells us that the scriptures furnish us to “all good works. Psa.119:105 “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light...” declared David.

3. Indestructibility: People misunderstand that the Bible cannot be destroyed. Hence they have sought to destroy it. Men have declared it would soon cease to be. But it is still here. Today if every bible were burned, the book could still be reproduced from other books that quote it. Even if men were to succeed, the Bible will face them at the judgment. Jno. 12:48 “...the words I speak unto you the same shall judge you in the last day,” said Jesus. John saw the small and great standing before God, in judgment. Revelation 20:12.

II. Many Misunderstand The Testaments.

Flyleaf of the bible reads: The Holy Bible containing both the Old and New Testaments. Heb.8:13 “In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” Jeremiah 31:31 “Behold the days are coming says the Lord when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke though I was a husband to them says the Lord.”

Deut.4:13 “So he declared to you His covenant which he commanded you to perform, the Ten commandments, and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.”

Jere.31:33 “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people.” These verses teach that God made a covenant with the Jewish nation when he led them out of Egypt. That covenant is referred to as “the old covenant or testament.” Under the Old covenant a Jewish male was circumcised on the 8th day, thus entering the covenant God had made with Israel. That covenant was written on stone.

The New covenant, on the other hand, is written on the heart i.e. one must accept its teachings in his heart or mind before he can be accepted into the covenant.

He must be changed John 3:5 “Except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.” The Old covenant was to last until Christ came Gal.3:19 “Wherefore then serveth the law it was added because of transgression till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made.”

That seed was Christ. When he came, he fulfilled the law and when he died it was nailed to the cross. Col. 2:14 “Having blotted out the handwriting of ordinances which was against us and contrary to us taking it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.”

Today we hear Christ Mt.17:15 “This is my beloved Son, hear ye him...”

Heb.1:1-2 “God who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the

fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son..."

The implications: Where would we read about the New Testament Church? Where would we go to find out what to do to be saved? Or to identify the day of worship? The answer: obviously not the old testament, but rather the new. Heb. 9:15 "And for this reason, he is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

III. Many Misunderstand The Books of The Bible.

The Old Testament books point forward to Christ The Law or Moses or the First Covenant was designed to bring the Jews to Jesus. "Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

The books of the New Testament point backward to Christ having come. The Gospels (Mt.-John) create faith: John 20:30-31 "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."

The Acts--Book of conversions: Three thousand in Acts 2; Saul in Acts 22, Jailer in Acts 16, Ethiopian in Acts 8.

The Epistles--Romans-Jude: written to individual Christians and churches to instruct the child of God how to live and churches how to honor the law of Christ.

The Revelation: Provides a glimpse of things then to come, and the glorious outcome of the Church triumphant.

IV. Many Misunderstand The Chapters and Verses of The Bible.

The bible did not come from God broken down into chapters and verses.

This is the work of man. This often contributes to a misunderstanding. Acts 1:26-2:1-13 is a case in point. If one reads the last verse of Acts chapter 1 and continues right on into the first verse of chapter 2 it is clear that the antecedent of "they" refers to the 12 apostles and not to the 120. This means that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was only for the 12 apostles.

Often a thought, like this one, will extend from one chapter into the next or from one verse into several others. Everything one must do in order to be saved is not always given in one verse or chapter. It is necessary to read the bible's teaching on the entire subject in order to understand what the will of the Lord is.

Acts 2:38 talks about repentance and baptism but says nothing about faith.

Heb. 11:6 makes it clear that one cannot be saved without faith.

So both verses must be taken into account, in order to get the whole picture.

V. Many Misunderstand the Phrases of the Bible.

Some try to get salvation before baptism, yet Mk. 16:16 the phrase says "he that believeth

AND is baptized shall be saved..." The phrase clearly teaches that faith plus baptism equals salvation. Faith without baptism will not result in salvation. The same problem arises when people try to get remission of sins before baptism in Acts 2:38. The scripture is very plain in teaching that remission of sins comes only after one has repented and been baptized. Not before.

VI. Many Misunderstand The Words of the Bible.

Some misunderstand the word "For" in Acts 2:38 and think it means "because" of the remission of sins. They then conclude that one is baptized because they are saved already. The truth, however, is that "For" means in order to, or in order that sins might be forgiven." (Both repentance and baptism are for or in order to the forgiveness of sins.)

The word Baptism is also often misunderstood. It means to "submerge" "dip" "plunge" "Immerse." Rom. 6:3-4 teaches that baptism is a "burial." Hence sprinkling cannot be baptism.

Repentance--is not godly sorrow, but "worketh godly sorrow" i.e. godly sorrow brings about repentance.

There are many other examples where various words have been misunderstood, and thereby the message of the bible has been misunderstood.

In Acts 8 the man from Ethiopia is asked by Philip "Do you understand what you are reading?"

"How can I except some man guide me?" he replied. At that point the scripture says that "Philip preached unto him Jesus."

It is important that we understand the word of God.

The word of God can be understood Note: Neh. 8:1-2 "Now all the people gathered as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month." They could understand. So can we and we should make every effort to do so. Sometime we may need to be guided as did the Ethiopian. But it will be worth it. How sad it is that the world's greatest book is also the world's most misunderstood book.