

How To UNDERSTAND The Bible!

The Bible is the best-selling book that everyone owns, few read and none understand; many frankly admit "I read the Bible because I'm supposed to, but I just can't understand it! It just doesn't make sense to me!" and there is no wonder! Because the Bible is not *explained* by teachers today – doctrines are taught, religious books are quoted, but the Bible itself is largely ignored!

Why can't men understand the Bible today? Why are there so many tens of thousands of denominations out there? Why is a discussion on religion almost sure to end in a quarrel? Why can't men just AGREE on this? After all, they all have the same source of information about God – they ALL trace their understanding back to the very same Bible, so why can't ANY agree?

THE FIRST KEY

Well, let me explain it this way. Pull out a road map of your state. This map is a paper pattern showing you, on a small scale, what the real world looks like – where the roads are, where the towns are, where the swamps are.

But this map is only useful to you IF YOU OBEY IT, and if you TRUST IT! Suppose you wanted to go from Dallas to Austin. The map says you should head south on Interstate 35. But suppose you've been told that the map is wrong, and that you should take I-25 instead. If you ignore the map and trust this rumor instead, you'll be driving around in circles for there IS no I-25 in Dallas!

The Bible is much like that. It is a paper representation of the real world. It tells us about the plan of God, where we are headed in this world, and in the next; it tells us why suffering happens and how to change it. But ONLY if we OBEY it and TRUST it! Suppose the Bible says...

Proverbs 3:1-2 *My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: **For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee.***"

And now suppose the rumor is floating around that Jesus did away with those nasty old commandments, and so you go out and break them. Can you truly blame the Bible if you don't find "length of days, long life, and peace" – when you did the exact opposite of what it said? Or can you blame only the fact that you didn't TRUST your map, and believed RUMOR instead!

And so to understand the Bible, the very first step is to ignore EVERYTHING anyone has ever said about it, and just read it for what it says. No more, no less. God wrote the Bible for YOU to understand – not for the doctors of divinity and televangelists to understand, but for YOU.

Luke 10:21 *In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, **THAT THOU HAST HID THESE THINGS FROM THE WISE AND PRUDENT, AND HAST REVEALED THEM UNTO BABES:** even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.*

Wise men don't understand the Bible because they think they know more than it does! They are constantly editing and rewriting it, saying "obviously it can't mean *that...*" and interpreting it to mean something totally different from what it really says. And so of COURSE they can't understand it – and equally of course, you can.

THE SECOND KEY

Psalms 111:10 *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a **GOOD UNDERSTANDING have all they that DO HIS COMMANDMENTS:** his praise endureth for ever.*

So the first key is to TRUST the Bible – FEAR to change it, and make it say something it doesn't say. But the second key then is to OBEY it – once you've trusted it, and understood what it said, you must OBEY what it says – and the very first thing you must obey is summed up by the words of Jesus: "*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*" (**John 14:15**). How plain! If you want to understand the Bible, TRUST IT! And if you want to understand more, OBEY what you already understood!

THE THIRD KEY

But there is a third key. And that is that the Bible is written in symbols. Men try to explain these symbols many ways, but they can't agree because they are simply GUESSING! But you don't have to guess! The Bible's symbols are SIMPLE, and they are ALWAYS explained elsewhere in the Bible, often in the immediate context; never forget these words:

Man is not QUALIFIED to interpret the Bible; the *BIBLE* interprets the Bible!

A simple example is in the book of Revelation, chapter 1. John relates a vision of candlesticks, and stars, and flames; what are these? Must we guess, as many do? No! **Revelation 1:20** tells us very clearly that the seven stars represent seven ANGELS. And now throughout the Bible, EVERY time "star" is used as a symbol, it ALWAYS means an angel! (**Isaiah 14:13, Job 38:7, etc**) **And this is how the Bible interprets the Bible!**

Again, go back to the analogy of the map; the Bible is quite literally a map of salvation, a map of the plan of God. And like any map, it has a legend – a portion devoted to unlocking the rest of it. Look at your state map – without that legend in the corner, how would you know what the symbol was for a rest area? How could you tell it from the symbol for a tunnel, or a toll booth, or a national park? You couldn't – that's why they included a legend!

But if you thought you knew better than the map, and ignored that legend, you might go looking for a rest area and find a toll booth instead; and then you'd say "Well this map is just all wrong – it doesn't make any sense!" and you'd be right! But the fault wasn't with the map, the fault was that you didn't trust the legend that came WITH the MAP, the explanation that was MEANT to decode the map!

Men cannot understand the Bible primarily because of these three things; they don't TRUST the Bible, they don't OBEY the Bible, and they don't let the Bible INTERPRET the Bible.

THE FOURTH KEY

This is the simplest of all. Don't trust men. Especially me! Blow the dust off your Bible, dig it out from under your bed and scrape the cobwebs off of it and USE IT. Demand PROOF from your teachers – including me. The Bible says *“It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.”* (**Psalms 118:8**).

The confusion about religion in the world today all stems from one source. Men believed other men more than God. As you study this lesson and the lessons to come, you will see again and again that the most cherished doctrines you grew up believing were based not in the Bible, but in traditions started by men. These traditions are fun, and seductive, and sound reasonable – but they can't save you! And they can't deliver you out of confusion, because there is no basis to them – they are castles built on sand!

Proverbs 16:25 *There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*

No matter how much sense these doctrines make to you – no matter how much good it seems to you that they do, they result in DEATH unless they are inspired by God. Because the way that seems right to us is the way of death. If that were not true, where would wars come from? And crime, and hatred? If the way that seemed good to man truly WAS good, crime would get better as time went by – not worse. Fewer people would die of disease as time went by – not more every year.

Psalms 146:3 *Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.*

There is ONE source for our faith. Only one. Everyone on Earth who claims to be Christian has only ONE ultimate source. The difference between the various religions out there is only that *they each listen to different men* who explained the Bible differently. Your job is to cut through all of those centuries of accumulated babbling and GET BACK TO THE BIBLE. Find the truth for YOURSELF. And as you do that, you'll see there is only ONE truth.

THE FIFTH KEY

Daniel 12:8-10 *And I [Daniel] heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: AND NONE OF THE WICKED SHALL UNDERSTAND; but the wise shall understand.*

Daniel didn't understand this prophecy that he wrote. He asked the angel what it meant, and the angel told him to not to worry about trying to understand it – that the words were SEALED and COULD NOT BE UNDERSTOOD UNTIL THE TIME OF THE END!

Get that! God has been working a plan all along, a plan nearing fruition as you'll soon study for yourself; and until that plan reached a certain stage, God didn't want ANY of it leaking out! And so while the words were written, the way of unlocking them – the way to break the seal was NOT EXPLAINED! And was not to BE explained, until the time of the END!

Luke 10:24 *For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*

The things that you are able to understand today are things the Apostles themselves would have LOVED to see – not different things, there are no changes from what they understood and taught, but *deeper* and *clearer UNDERSTANDING* than was ever revealed to them! Not because you or I are more valuable to God than those prophets and wise men, but merely because we are closer to the end! We see things and take them for granted that they would have given their right arm to understand, but it wasn't time yet! But now it is!

TO SUMMARIZE

Owning a Bible doesn't make you a Christian. Going to church doesn't make you a Christian. Calling Jesus "Lord" doesn't make you a Christian. Obeying Christ makes you a Christian.

Matthew 7:21 *NOT every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

Calling Jesus "Lord", and accepting Him as personal Savior does NOT get you a ticket into the kingdom of heaven – because Jesus said that NOT everyone who did that will enter! Only those who DO the will of His Father!

These keys to understanding are fundamental to every true Christian. If you don't begin with this foundation, if you let opinions of men influence you away from a single word in the Bible, you will never be able to truly understand. Only by doing the will of God can you understand.

These lessons will do their best NOT to tell you the will of God. It is not their purpose. This is a Bible STUDY course. The purpose is to show you where YOU can *find* the facts, not to give you the facts. This is what makes this course absolutely unique.

To study them, ALWAYS have the Bible before you. If a scripture is written there, LOOK IT UP. Don't assume you know what it says! It is quoted here because we feel it has a direct bearing on helping you understand who, what, and why you are.

You will get out of this course no more than what you put into it. If you breeze through it so you can get back to your family, friends, TV and job, then the truth will breeze through you and not leave a lasting impression. If however you spend at least half an hour every day – the time you spend watching one empty sit-com – studying this course and the verses and the context referenced, and then rereading the verses and making sure they say exactly what I've said they say, then it will stick with you.

You may like to take notes on your thoughts as you discover things in the Bible you didn't know were there. Writing the verses down long-hand helps to remember them longer. If this helps you, do it! But above all, enter the study with a willingness to believe what you find in the Bible – no matter how shocking it is, no matter how unexpected it is, what you find there is Truth. Not what I say, but what IT says.

Jesus said some things in **John 6** that were so shocking, all His followers left Him. He then asked the twelve disciples "*Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.*" (**John 6:67-68**).

If what Jesus says is too shocking, too different from what your pastor says or what your grandmother taught you, will you also go away? Or will you stay? Because truly the Bible alone has the words of eternal life! If you can't accept those words, where else will you go to find them?

HOW TO USE THIS LESSON

To refer a final time to the map analogy, maps have little meaning to us unless we know where we are in the map; a little “you are here” label on it makes the difference between an abstract, interesting map, and a MEANINGFUL GUIDE TO LIFE. And so of the many good places to start, I think this is the most important. The scriptures you will read will raise many questions, but if you hold on to them I think most if not all will be addressed in upcoming lessons as soon as possible.

This lesson isn't going to make any effort to show scriptures that disprove popular beliefs on the subjects raised – future lessons will do that. This will only show you the foundation of what God says has happened, and will happen, in His plan.

To begin with, we must establish where we should look. The Bible, of course, but which parts? Are all parts of the Bible inspired? **2 Timothy 3:16**. Does that scripture tell us that any part is more useful or true than any other? Is it possible to be saved using the Old Testament? **2 Timothy 3:15**.

The only “holy scriptures” which Timothy could possibly have known “from a child”, were those we call the Old Testament; when Timothy was a child, the New Testament had not been written yet!

Does that verse tell us the Old Testament is able to make you wise to salvation THROUGH FAITH? And faith in “Christ Jesus”, at that? How is this possible? **John 5:46, Luke 24:44**. So are the Old and New Testaments equally inspired by God? **2 Peter 1:21**.

LESSON 1: GOD'S PLAN FOR YOU

What existed in the beginning? **John 1:1**. Who is this “Word”? **Revelation 19:13, 16**. Who is this “King of Kings”? **1 Timothy 6:14-15**.

From the beginning, there was God, whom Jesus called “The Father”, and there was the “Word”. The Greek word for *word* is *Logos*, meaning spokesperson – one who speaks for God. Did Jesus speak for the Father? **John 12:50**. So it was the same in the beginning.

Who made all things – Jesus or the Father? **John 1:3, 1:10, Colossians 1:16-17**. But whose command was Jesus obeying when He made all things? **Ephesians 3:9**. Is the Father superior in authority to Jesus? **John 14:28**.

The Father gave the command; Jesus did the creating.

In **Genesis 1:26**, does God say let ME make man in MY image? Is more than one “God” present? From what you just read, is that the Father or Jesus talking, saying “let US make man in OUR image after OUR likeness”? Who gave the command? **Hebrews 1:2**. Did one God, or two, do the actual CREATION? Did “they” create man, or did “HE” create man? **Genesis 1:27**. Also **Malachi 2:10**. Which “God” did the work? **John 1:3** again.

Did God intend for man to become like Him? **1 John 3:2**. Did God command that man be made like God in TWO ways, or only one? **Genesis 1:26**. On day six, did God make man like God in two ways, or only ONE? **Genesis 1:27**.

God made His plan so clear from the beginning, but so few notice it! God commanded that man be made in the IMAGE of God, and in the LIKENESS of God. That is to say, God commanded that man

be made to LOOK like God, and to ACT like God! But in verse 27, God only made man in the IMAGE of God – to LOOK like Him! Nowhere in Genesis does it say that man was made on that day to ACT like God, in the LIKENESS of God! The job was left half-done!

Was man made with original sin, or good? **Genesis 1:31**. What happened then, once man was made “upright”? **Ecclesiastes 7:29**. Are these “inventions” good things, or evil? **Psalms 106:29, 39**. So did man prefer to try Satan’s way instead of God’s way? **Proverbs 14:12**. Why did man prefer Satan’s way? **Jeremiah 17:9**.

Man’s basic state is not good, as the philosophers tell you. God, who made the nature of man, insists that it is evil.

Romans 8:7 (BBE) *Because the mind of the flesh is opposite to God; it is not under the law of God, and is not able to be:*

Why? Because man is only half-finished. He was created to physically resemble God in shape and form, but his nature is not yet like God’s nature. Why? Because of free will. In this situation, God has two options. Either strip away all free will from you and make EVERY decision FOR you – which would make you no better than a computer or a robot – or allow you to make choices for yourself.

But why can’t God make you so that you just won’t make BAD choices? Because there is no way to allow only one sort of choice without denying free will. To be a free moral agent, you must be physically capable of making both GOOD choices AND bad ones!

Can you learn to drive from a book? No, you learn how to drive by trying – and often failing – to drive. Can you learn to juggle by watching someone else? Or must you learn by continually dropping and picking up and trying again? Can you learn to write, without first scribbling drivel? No more can you learn to make good choices without first making bad ones, and feeling the results.

Are you here to learn to tell good from evil? **Hebrews 5:14**. How does that verse say we learn that? Is it something that we are born with? **Isaiah 7:16**. Is it our free choice to make? **Deuteronomy 30:15, 19**. How do we choose? **Romans 6:16**. And how do you correct a bad choice? **Verse 17**. How can you tell a bad choice from a good one? **Verse 21**. And what does a series of bad choices ultimately bring? **Verse 23**.

It is so important that we learn this for ourselves because we are not born knowing what “hot” or “pain” or “suffering” or “evil” means. As a child, we gather vague ideas of what they mean, but no one ever learns what it means to burn yourself until you’ve been burned. And I can tell you “pain hurts” but until you FEEL pain, it’s only words to you! But after you burn yourself, then you learn to dislike pain; next time you avoid hot things, and avoid being burned. Sin is no different.

You must feel it for yourself; see how it makes you feel, see what sort of a life it builds for you, and understand it fully as much as you understand that pain hurts. Then you learn to avoid it, and hate it, and reject it – and that is the beginning of the SECOND part of the creation of man – becoming like God and learning to HATE SIN!

Having your senses exercised BY REASON OF USE to tell the difference between good and evil!

What is God’s nature like? **1 John 4:8**. And what is love? **Romans 13:8-10**. Are we to develop a nature like God? **Philippians 2:5-6**. Are we to behave ourselves as Christ behaved? **1 John 2:6**. And do the

things Christ did? **John 14:12**. Is He in all things a perfect pattern? **1 Peter 2:21**. Are we to pattern our very natures after His? **2 Peter 1:4**.

What a tremendous promise! To be partakers of the divine nature! To finish that process begun in **Genesis 1:26**, no longer merely to LOOK like God, but to have the very divine NATURE of God as well! To be free of hatred and evil, to no longer have a nature that wants to please itself and is willing to cause suffering to anyone else to do it – but to have a nature that is a duplicate of the nature of God in all points of morality, but still with our own personality to bring spice to the universe! (**1 John 3:9**).

And why is God doing all this? Why is He patterning not only our appearance, but our very natures after His? **Colossians 1:12**. And why is He making us “meet” or “fit” to inherit the promises? What are these promises? **1 John 2:25**. Would God want to spend eternity with someone whose nature is the “enemy of God” (**Romans 8:7**)? So before receiving those promises, must you change? **2 Corinthians 7:1**.

But there is more to it than simply receiving immortality. Did God make every beast, bird, fish, and animal to raise a family and reproduce after its kind? (**Genesis 1:25**). Does the cow reproduce another cow, or does it give birth to a fish? And when it reproduces a cow, does it physically resemble the parent? Is it made in the image of the parent? And is it made to act like its parent? So a calf is made in the image and the likeness of its parents.

Does Jesus claim any family relationship to us? **Hebrews 2:9, 11, 12, 17** (specifically verse 12). Does God claim any family relationship to us? **Hebrews 12:5**. The Father’s name even expresses that He is our Father. But is He our physical, literal Father? **Hebrews 12:9**. Are we born spirit? **John 3:6**. Will we be spirit in this life? **John 3:8**. Does that scripture say those who are spirit can be seen or heard? Can those who are “born again”, or “born of spirit” be touched? **Luke 24:39**. Can you sin? Does that mean you are born of God, or that you CAN be born of God in this life? **1 John 3:9**.

God is the Father of SPIRITS – not the Father of flesh. We are not yet spirit, for we can be seen, touched, have flesh and bone, and can sin. We were created to be of the Human species. The Human kind. But we were created to resemble God, and we are offered a tremendous opportunity – to be ADOPTED into the God-kind! **Ephesians 1:5, Romans 8:18, 1 Corinthians 2:9**.

So that as we now are part of the Human species, we will become a part of the God species. This process is already half-done, we were made in His image. But now we have to help do the second part, by choosing to allow ourselves to be made in His LIKENESS. By taking His CHARACTER into us, we will finish the creation process begun so long ago.

But we cannot be His literal children because He is the Father of Spirits, and not of flesh! So the only solution is for US to become spirits as well, and JOIN our Father! And so when Jesus says we will be born again “*of the spirit*” (**John 3:6**), He means that we will literally be born again AS A SPIRIT BEING! With a NEW body, just as we were born with the body of our human fathers in this life, so we will be given a NEW body made like that of our God Father! **1 Corinthians 15:49, Philippians 3:21, 1 Corinthians 15:53, Colossians 3:4**.

But we don’t have it yet! **2 Corinthians 1:22**. We have only a down-payment, the EARNEST of that spirit – just a little bit of it. When you are baptized into the Family of God, you are begotten – not born, but begotten – as a child of God. In other words, you are conceived. And through the rest of your life you grow, in the womb of this Earth, and then you die. What then? Why, then you receive a new spirit

body! You are BORN again – not into the human kind, but into the GOD kind – to be a member of the Family of God!

How do we get this new body? **1 Corinthians 15:35-36, 42-44**. This resurrection from the dead – when does it happen? **Verse 52**. When does this “last trump” sound? The last trump is blown by the seventh angel in **Revelation 11:15**. **Verse 18** confirms that is the time of the first resurrection.

This happens just as Christ returns. Some denominations deny that Jesus will literally return to the Earth, but to deny that is to call Him a liar. **Acts 1:9-11, John 14:3**.

After the first resurrection of the righteous saints, are all the other dead resurrected too? **Revelation 20:5**. Does that scripture say that after that thousand years, they live again? What happens to them? The answer will have to wait for another lesson, but suffice it to say **THEY ARE NOT HOPELESSLY LOST!**

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

You will only inherit those promises of a new body and adoption into the family of God IF YOU FULFILL THE CONDITIONS! Only IF you have LEARNED to tell right from wrong, good from evil, learned by USE what sin brings and learned from EXPERIENCE to HATE it with all your being! Only if you’ve obeyed God with all your heart through thick and thin will God find you useful in His Kingdom! But if you can do that, you will be WORTHY to be adopted into the Family of God, WORTHY to be trusted with all power in the universe, because God can be CERTAIN that you hate evil as much as He does!

Revelation 3:21 *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me IN MY THRONE, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father IN HIS THRONE.*

Christ promises you a seat beside Him in His throne ruling the universe JUST AS the Father gave Christ a seat beside HIM! Can you grasp that? Can you even dimly perceive the enormity of that awesome promise??

To be a GOD, AS GOD IS GOD!

No possible truth could be more shocking, or more astounding, than this promise of Almighty God! Not to push God off of His throne, as Satan wanted to do, but to be INVITED to rule WITH Him, under Him, but LIKE HIM! As a member of His family, a beloved Son in whom He is well pleased!

Philippians 2:5-6 *Let THIS mind BE IN YOU, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it NOT ROBBERY TO BE EQUAL WITH GOD:*

Christ was in the FORM, the very IMAGE of God! Just like you and me! And He had accepted the spirit of God, humbled Himself under the commands of God, and MADE HIS HEART into the LIKENESS of GOD! And He KNEW that meant He was begotten as a new member of the God KIND, just as you are if you have obeyed God and fulfilled His conditions!

And Paul was inspired to tell YOU to have THAT MIND in YOU! To act as He acted, and be a person who doesn’t think it is ROBBERY to be EQUAL with GOD!

John 10:34-35 *Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture CANNOT BE BROKEN;*

He called them GODS to whom the Word of God CAME! Because the Word of God CHANGES the heart (**Hebrews 4:12**), and undertakes the process of making your nature over into the very LIKENESS OF GOD!

God's purpose on this Earth, the REASON you were born, the reason for ALL THIS is that GOD WANTS A FAMILY! And He wants YOU to be a part of it! God is building for Himself a tremendous family, adopting children out of the human kind and making them a part of the God-family, a part of the God-KIND!! So that YOU can be a member of the Family of God!

Acts 17:28-29 *For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also HIS OFFSPRING. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God ...*

WE are the OFFSPRING – the very CHILDREN of God! God's way of procreating, and filling the universe with a family that is HIS, that thinks like Him and ACTS like Him! This is God's plan for YOU!

Surely nothing could be more shocking, more thrilling, or more awe-inspiring than these simple words! Jesus went through this same process of being born as a man, living, obeying, dying, and finally being resurrected as a new being – finally being BORN AGAIN OF THE SPIRIT, and He did this as an EXAMPLE to us!

An example, so that we would have a pattern to follow, knowing that He is the FIRST of MANY to come! The Eldest Brother in the Family of God! The Bible says that Jesus was “*the firstborn AMONG MANY BRETHREN*” (**Romans 8:29**). MANY brothers of Jesus, sons of the Father, full-fledged spirit members of the Family of God are to come, and YOU may be one of them!

You, yes, YOU have been offered a chance by God to be one of those brothers of Jesus, sons of Almighty God, heir to immortality and adopted into the literal SPECIES of God, partaker of the nature of God, free from the corruption of your present nature!

God help you to understand this glorious truth!

NOTES

NOTES

This work is completely non-denominational and is meant to fulfill Christ's great commission to "*preach the gospel to every creature*" (**Mark 16:15**). **This publication is not to be sold;** "*freely ye have received, freely give*" (**Matthew 10:8**).

The Bible tells us to PROVE ALL THINGS, and The Simple Answers encourages people to do just that. If you cannot PROVE what you believe, you have no right to believe it! Many of the things we print are shocking because they are different from what you've heard, but if something we say offends or upsets you, we hope you will take the time to set aside your preconceived ideas and PROVE your point from the Bible to see if you truly have been right all these years.

We are dedicated to providing the SIMPLE answers to difficult questions. Please submit questions and/or comments to us using the contact information below.

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