

Plain & Simple



Understanding How To Understand The Bible

“The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding...” (Psalm 119:130).

Article # 2

We Have No Excuse For Ignorance

There are more than 250 references in the Bible referring to the importance of us *understanding* the things of God. Second Peter 3:8 says, “*Beloved be not ignorant.*”

Understanding The Context of Scriptures

If Scriptures are not understood within their context, we can make the Bible say anything we want it to say. Cults, Charismatics and Calvinism are all the products of taking Scriptures out of context.

Understanding Right Division

We must learn how to rightly divide the Word. Second Timothy 2:15

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Understanding Who Does The Teaching

Our Teacher is the Holy Spirit. God gave us pastors “*for the perfecting of the saints*”; however, how is one to know if the pastor is teaching the truth? We could listen to a Baptist pastor and he will tell us he is preaching the truth. We could listen to a Pentecostal pastor, or a Brethren pastor, and they too will tell us that they are preaching the truth.

We Have A Promise

Jesus said “*And ye shall know (ginōskō) the truth...*” (John 8:32). The Greek word (*ginōskō*) has been translated *understand* seven times. Even the carnal Corinthians were without excuse. They could understand if they wanted to.

First Corinthians 2:10 tells Christians that God would reveal the things of God to them “*...by his Spirit.*”

- **Verse 10** says the Spirit teaches “*the deep things of God...by his Spirit.*”
- **Verse 11** continues, “*...the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*”
- **Verse 13** says the Spirit teaches “*spiritual things.*”

The Holy Spirit Only Teaches Those Who Want To Be Taught

Verse 15 plainly says, “*He that is spiritual judgeth all things.*” The Greek word translated *judgeth* is *anakrinō*. It means to hold an investigation. He that is spiritual investigates. To investigate is to carry out a systematic or formal inquiry to discover and examine the facts. The Greek word *anakrinō* has been translated *examine* six times.

It is translated *searched* in Acts 17:11 where we read Paul commended the Berean Christians; after he preached, they went home and “*searched (anakrinō) the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*” It is in this context that verse 15 says “*...he that is spiritual judgeth (examines) all things.*”

- **Jesus said** "...the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things..." (John 14:26).
- **Jesus said,** "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:" (John 16:13).

The Teacher And The Student

The Holy Spirit has total wisdom. There is nothing that He does not know. However, He can only teach if He has a student.

- **Proverbs 1:5** says, "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning."
- **Romans 15:4** says, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning."

What Do You Desire?

- **First Peter 2:2** commands us, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."

The Greek word *epipotheō* translated "desire" here has been translated "greatly desire" twice and "earnestly desiring" in another Scripture.

- **Proverbs 18:1** says "Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom."

How To Develop A Desire To Understand The Word of God

- **Psalm 37:4** says, "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart."

This verse means that if we delight ourselves in the Lord he will put His desires in our heart.

- **Job 22:26** "...delight in the Almighty."
- **Job 27:10** "Will he delight himself in the Almighty?"
- **Psalm 37:4** "Delight thyself also in the LORD."
- **Isaiah 58:14** "...delight thyself in the LORD."

To delight in Lord is to take great pleasure in Him.

Consider the prayers of someone who was eager to learn.

- **Psalm 25:4** "O LORD; teach me thy paths."
- **Psalm 25:5** "Lead me in thy truth, and teach me."
- **Psalm 27:1** "Teach me thy way, O LORD."
- **Psalm 86:1** "Teach me thy way, O LORD."

- **Psalm 119:26** "Teach me thy statutes."
- **Psalm 119:33** "Teach me, O LORD."
- **Psalm 119:64** "O LORD...teach me thy statutes."
- **Psalm 119:66** "Teach me good judgment."
- **Psalm 119:68** "Teach me thy statutes."
- **Psalm 119:108** "Teach me thy judgments."
- **Psalm 119:124** "Teach me thy statutes."
- **Psalm 119:135** "Teach me thy statutes."
- **Psalm 143:10** "Teach me to do thy will."

Are You Eager To Learn?

Question - How long have you been a Christian?

Question - How often have you prayed asking God to teach you?

- **Jesus said** "...go ye and learn." (Matthew 9:13).
- **Jesus said** "...learn of me." (Matthew 11:29).
- **Jesus said** "Learn a parable of the fig tree." (Matthew 11:29).

Question - How long have you been a Christian?

Question - Have you learned the parable of the fig tree?

- **Paul said** "that ye might learn." (First Corinthians 4:6)
- **Paul said** "...that all may learn." (First Corinthians 14:31)
- **Paul said** "...that they may learn." (First Timothy 1:20)
- **Paul said** "Let the woman learn." (First Timothy 2:11)
- **Paul said** "let them (widows) learn" (First Timothy 5:4)
- **Paul said** "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." (Romans 15:4)

Choices And Consequences

In First Corinthians 2:10-13, Paul told the Christians that the Holy Spirit was willing to teach them "spiritual things." Paul said,

- **First Corinthians 10:1** "I would not that ye should be ignorant."
- **First Corinthians 12:1** "I would not have you ignorant."
- **First Corinthians 14:38** "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant."

If we are spiritually ignorant, it is because we choose to be spiritually ignorant. A person may be saved for many years and still be spiritually ignorant.

Paul wrote in Hebrews chapter 5:12, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."

Learning About Right Division

Everything in the Scriptures must be interpreted in light of the *past*, the *present*, or the *future*. For example, when John wrote the book of Revelation, we read in Revelation 1:19 that he was commanded to, "Write the things which thou **hast seen**, (Past) and **the things which are**, (Present) and **the things which shall be hereafter.**" (Future).

Paul's letter to the Ephesians also focuses on three time periods:

Past Tense

- **Ch.2:2**, "...in time **past**..."
- **Ch.2:3**, "...in times **past**..."

Present Tense

- **Ch.2:2**, "...the spirit that **now** worketh..."
- **Ch.2:13**, "**But now**..."
- **Ch.2:19**, "**Now** therefore..."
- **Ch.3:5**, "...it is **now** revealed."
- **Ch.4:9**, "**Now** that he ascended..."
- **Ch.5:8**, "...**but now**..."

Future Tense

- **Ch.2:7**, "That in **the ages to come**..."

Some Questions We Will Consider In Upcoming Articles



1. **Why** did Jesus say not to go to Samaria (Matthew 10:5), and then go and preach several days in Samaria (John 4)?
2. **Why** did Jesus refuse to answer the question the disciples asked Him concerning whether or not He would restore the kingdom at that time? (Acts 1:6)?
3. **How** do we know when to interpret the "kingdom of God" or the "kingdom of heaven" literally or spiritually?
4. **Why** did they cast lots when replacing Judas (Acts 1:26)?
5. **Is there proof** in the Scriptures that local churches were meeting prior to Calvary?
6. **Peter said that women would prophesy** in the last days (Acts 2:17). Should we have women preachers today?
7. **Why** did Peter command his listeners to be baptized in the Name of "Jesus" rather than in the Name of the "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37,38)?
8. **Why** did Peter command his listeners to be baptized "for the remission of sins?" (Acts 2:37,38)?
9. **Why** did Peter say if they were baptized they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38)?
10. **Why** were they eating "meat" at a communion service (Acts 2:46)?
11. **Why** did Paul say Moses had a church in the wilderness (Acts 7:38)?
12. **Why** did Jesus say "Father forgive them they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34)? Does that mean that all who took part in His crucifixion went to heaven?
13. **Why** did Ananias and Sapphira die for lying when others did not (Acts 5:1-10)? Rebecca, Jacob, Abraham, Rahab, and Peter all lied without dying.
14. **Why** did Peter call Christ a "stone" (Acts 4:11)?
15. **Why** did Paul list fourteen qualifications for deacons in First Timothy, and Peter listed only three qualifications for the men chosen in Acts chapter six?
16. **Why** were none of the qualifications in Peter's list included in Paul's list, and why were none of the qualifications in Paul's list included in Peter's list?
17. **Why**, approximately twelve years after the day of Pentecost did Peter tell Cornelius it was "unlawful" for him to fellowship with Gentiles (Acts 10:28)?
18. **Why** did Philip baptize the Ethiopian eunuch in the desert (Acts 8:38)? Since baptism is a local church ordinance why did they baptize there?
19. **Why** did Paul need to travel over 100 miles to Arabia to receive instructions from the Lord (Galatians 1:17)?
20. **Why** were the apostles at Jerusalem upset with Peter for fellowshiping with a Gentile twelve years after the Day of Pentecost (Acts 11:1-3)?



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