

Fulton County Gospel News

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The Book Of Books!

George Washington said, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible." We often sing a song which begins, "How precious is the Book divine", and these words are certainly true. God's word is precious; His revelation is glorious. The influence of the scriptures upon our lives is tremendous. The power of the gospel has helped to elevate woman, abolish slavery, provide care for the needy, and, generally, to enrich society. The Psalmist informs us of the value of the Bible by writing, "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). The word shall judge us in the last day (John 12: 48). And even though life here is transient, the scripture will endure forever (I Peter 1:24,25).

So many people praise the Bible for its beauty and yet often these same people do not believe the Bible is capable of being understood. When a person has this idea, it would be well if he were to ask the following questions of himself:

1. Did God create us?
2. Does He love us?
3. Did God give us the Bible?
4. Does He want us to be saved?
5. Would God give us His message in such a manner as to confuse us?
6. Is the Creator incapable of conveying His thoughts to His own creation?

A logical, honest answer to these questions certainly will make us reluctant to believe that we cannot understand the Bible. "God is not the author of confusion" (I Corinthians 14: 33; Ephesians 5: 17; II Corinthians 1: 13). We CAN understand the Lord's will. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8: 32). Yes, we CAN know the truth. Critics of the Bible expect us to understand them when they say we cannot understand the Bible. Is man more capable of expressing himself to man than is the Creator? Men gladly received Peter's sermon on Pentecost and were obedient to it (Acts

2:41). If hundreds could understand his sermon and obey it THEN, why cannot men today understand that same sermon written down? The truth is: We can understand the Bible, if we want to!

Some, of course, tell us that "we cannot understand the scriptures alike." But, to understand anything, we must see it alike. If we disagree, someone misunderstood something! Suppose you ask the distance between New York City and Los Angeles, and the answer given is 3,000 miles. Now everyone who understands the answer would understand it exactly the same. If someone THOUGHT the answer was 1,500 miles he would just be mistaken. If we understand the Bible we will all see it alike. Where there is disunity, someone is wrong. But why is the Bible misunderstood?

Many fail to study it intelligently. We are exhorted to make a diligent study of the Bible so that we will handle it properly (II Timothy 2: 15). If we were all noble like the Bereans we would "receive the word with all readiness of mind and search the scriptures daily" (Acts 17: 11). Those who wish to profit from reading the Bible need to notice carefully the CONTEXT of the passage. Who wrote it? To whom was it written? When was it said? What was the purpose? What was the result of the situation described? You would not get the gist of a stage play if you walked in during the second scene of the third act. Neither would you properly learn algebra by beginning in the middle of the book and following a haphazard method of study. But these absurd situations truly depict the type of approach so many make to Bible study. No wonder so little is known about the Book of God!

Some read with preconceived ideas. Prejudice is a greater enemy of the spiritual nature of man. It will cause us to read into the Bible our own biased

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Is The End Of The World Coming Soon?

Clovis Ragsdale

Over radio and TV we hear preachers constantly affirming that the end of the world is coming soon. No specific scripture is given as proof. The crisis of present world events seems to give many the idea that the end is soon. No doubt some are trying to shock sinners into becoming christians and wake up slumbering church members into more dedication and zeal in the Lord's work.

This attitude is nothing new. Paul encountered the same thing among the membership of the Thessalonian church and gave some teaching about this in chapters four and five of the first letter and in the second chapter of the second letter. Christ stated in Matt. 24: 36, that no man knoweth the day and hour, not even angels. The Father alone knows. In second Peter, chapter three, we have a statement that explains why man is at a disadvantage in the reckoning of time. Peter says that a day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day.

The world has experienced many crisis. Wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, famine, plagues, and other calamities have created despair in almost every generation and the end has not come yet.

Some would look to Old Testament writings and try to deduct signs of the end. A good point to remember about Old Testament prophecies is that most if indeed not all of the prophecies have come to pass in Christ and his church. The apostles spoke of a falling away that was to come. This was probably the dark ages. John, in Revelations, chapter twenty, speaks of a time when the kingdom or church would enjoy a period of prosperity that would last for a great period of time. This we believe has not yet fully come about. After this age, called the millennium by many, Christ will come in judgement, but not setting foot on earth as so many believe. His

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Consistency, Thou Art A Jewel

Isn't it wonderful that God dispenses his blessings, both material and spiritual, by law and design and not arbitrarily and capriciously? We are always in the position of knowing what to expect.

Of God's laws of nature governing the production, storing, transporting and use of electricity, for instance, were uncertain, changeable and fickle, we would be afraid to bring electric current into our homes because it might refuse to stay in the wires and therefore do harm rather than good. The same is true of water, fire, aspirin and any other thing God has provided in nature for the use of man.

We praise God and are grateful to him for all material blessings. We adore God and thank him for the fact that material blessings are governed by the laws of nature. We love God and appreciate his marvellous doings in the universe, for behind the order, plan and design of our world we see the upholding hand of God (Psalms 19: 1-3). We pray to God that he will continue to consistently govern the world and thereby give us our daily bread.

The spiritual blessings of God are distributed according to the laws revealed to us in the Bible. Every time a person obeys the commands of Jesus to believe and be baptized he is saved (Mark 16:16). Every saved person who remains faithful to the Lord even though he must die for his faithfulness will receive a crown of life (Revelation 2:10). Praise God! "God is not a God of confusion, but of peace."

IS THE END (Con't.)

second coming is described in I Thes. 4:16, For the Lord shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Paul knew nothing about Christ coming back to earth to rule and reign a thousand years in a literal sense. The pre-millennium theory depends on a literal interpretation of Rev. chapter 20, when the entire book is a book of signs and symbols. This theory creates a discord in the writings of the Bible and would discredit the whole Bible.

Preachers do not have to fall back on the end of the world to arouse people to doing their duty when we all know that as death finds us so will the judgement. This would come about for all in less than a hundred years and much sooner for most. The scriptures teach the urgency of coming to Christ at the first opportunity and the danger of delay. To teach the soon coming of Christ is a false doctrine and makes a false prophet of anyone declaring such. The truth is that no man knows save God himself.

Try This-For A Good Day!

Mend a quarrel. Search out a forgotten friend. Dismiss a suspicion, and replace it with trust. Write a loving letter. Share some treasure. Give a soft answer. Encourage youth. Manifest your loyalty in word or deed. Keep a promise. Find the time to listen. Forgive an enemy. Try to understand. Apologize if you were wrong. Examine your demands on others. Think first of someone else. Appreciate; be kind; be gentle. Laugh a little more. Deserve confidence. Dery complacency. Express your gratitude. Worship God. Gladden the heart of a child. Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth. Speak your love. Speak it again...still again. Speak it one more time.

Almighty God, Author of eternal light, illuminate our hearts by the light of Thy grace, that our lips may praise thee, that our lives may bless thee, that our worship may glorify thee. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Would I Study The Bible If???

William McPherson had a charge of dynamite go off in his face. He lost his eyes and hands and the feeling in parts of his face. He realized how much the Bible meant to him and he needed its strength greatly. He could not read it in Braille because of his artificial hands. He tried to place his lips on the dots but they were numb. He found he could use his tongue to decipher the Moon Type system of dashes. The metal left lips and tongue bleeding and very sore but he prayed to God to help him to continue to learn just one letter of the alphabet. In the 65 years that followed he read the Bible through 4 times with his tongue.

Would I study the Bible if the same thing happened to me that happened to Mr. McPherson? Would I have the desire, the intense desire to know God's will that I wonder if I would not rather have decided, "I can't ever read the Bible again."

Would I study the Bible if I had to get up an hour earlier each day to work it into my busy (?) schedule? Or miss my favorite TV program if, at that hour, I remembered I hadn't studied my Bible for the day and wouldn't have time afterwards?

Would I study the Bible (I wish I hadn't heard of that McPherson fellow (if I didn't feel just right or if I had had a hard day at work or if I was just too tired? (I wonder how that fellow learned to read with his tongue?) Or would I study even though I was a slow reader and it took me all day just to read one or two chapters.

Would I study the Bible on occasions when the saints were assembled (Sunday morning, Wednesday night and etc.) if I had to go without supper till after services or walk or drive several blocks to get there?

How many "ifs" keep you from studying the Bible? Is this matter of no importance to you at all? If it is, then do something about it. That McPherson fellow — I guess his example will haunt me the rest of my life.

Paul Johnson

Death: The Silent Stalker

It was almost midnight when the alarm sounded. The monitor radio policing ambulance calls has a double tone which is somewhat ominous within itself.

We had returned from a home study about eleven and in the mingled joy and sorrow of a good study without a positive conclusion had been unable to sleep.

The first report only gave an address and the designation that it was a sick call, so I made no effort to redress at first, as I waited for a further report. Then the harsh news of "Code Blue" . . . to show that vital signs were temporarily lost.

After dressing hurriedly, it was only a three minute drive to the hospital. The patient looked so good and had such normal breathing that it seemed certain the medical technician had miscalled his code number; but there was still the swift efficiency of taking care of his needs.

The good signs lasted so briefly, as the struggle between life and death began. Progression downhill was amazingly fast. There were the animal sounds of pain . . . the frailing limbs no longer controlled by a reasoning mind . . . the loosened bowels . . . and in the midst of it all the determination of specialists that he was going to live.

About halfway through these swift moving events I heard his full name called for the first time and realized suddenly, "I know this man personally. He's on our prospect list." Everything took on even a greater glow of meaning. I wanted him to live. I knew he wasn't ready to die.

His condition stabilized for a time; and we moved him to Intensive Care upstairs. Every possible thing was being done for him. The machines monitored every heartbeat.

Then the next attack came. The heart stopped; but by gallant effort was started again. The breathing became almost regular; but another attack stopped it all.

The doctor pronounced him dead. The attendant closed his eyes. The machines were shut off and the special equipment moved out. I had watched a prospect die.

I went to the home and faced again the unanswerable question of "Why?" I offered comfort where there was no comfort and understanding where there is no real understanding. Then left with a heavy heart, wondering what you and I could have done to make the story different.

There comes tomorrow . . . and I must play God again by marking someone off a prospect list because someone felt they were unworthy of our efforts. But out there somewhere are souls hungering for Truth. And we must find them! We must have patience and understanding for the time it takes to convince them of their error. We must stimulate interest . . . rather than expecting to find it already there. Then we must persevere--for as long as it takes to bring them to Jesus.

You may wonder next Sunday why the sermon is evangelistic . . . why the invitation seems unduly extended . . . why your speaker seems to be pleading with an urgency that you do not personally feel. You may wonder. You may object. You may feel that too much is being made of this thing called eternity. But let me assure you of this, You would feel differently if you had been the one who watched him die.

Jack Gray.

PRIDE

Have you heard the story about the frog who decided to seek a warmer climate?

He had no transportation, but hit upon a happy idea. He found a string and asked two wild geese, who were his friends, to take an end. As they did so he seized the string in the middle. The geese rose into the air and the frog found himself flying toward the land of his dreams.

A spectator from far below looked up and saw the strange sight. "Who invented that?", he shouted. The frog's pride would not allow him to keep silent. He opened his mouth to take credit and in so doing let go of the string and fell to his death. His pride was his ruin.

And so it is with the multitudes. It is said that a big mouth and a narrow mind make a disastrous combination. And it is equally true that vanity is the power that opens the mouth when it should remain shut. If we are doing anything worth being noticed, it will be. We do not need to "blow our own horn." Solomon said, "Let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth."

Selected

THE BOOK (Con't.)

opinions. We must "receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls" (James 1: 21). "Speak Lord, thy servant heareth" (I Samuel 3: 9).

Many are too concerned with what the Bible does not say. Foolish questions are often asked. "Where did Cain get his wife?" And, "What kind of bush was on fire when God spoke to Moses?" We should be concerned with passages that apply to us in our day. We must be interested in what the Bible says about men instead of what men say about the Bible.

Lack of study is the greatest reason for misunderstanding the scriptures. You cannot learn electronics without studying the subject carefully. And, we can only understand the Bible by applying ourselves to the task. A host of people SAY they would like to know more of the Book, but actions speak louder than words. Unless we really desire to know more about the Bible, we never shall. It ought to bother us when we cannot give a Bible reason for all that we believe and practice in religion (I Peter 3:15). It takes constant study to obey this divine command. But the effort is rewarding. Next Month--How to Understand The Bible Better.

by Bill Banks

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A person who doubts himself is like a man who would enlist in the ranks of his enemies and bear arms against himself. He makes the failure certain by himself being the first person to be convinced of it.

Daddy, Is This A Christian College?

My oldest girl is now nearly ten years old and often has many questions. She has wanted to know, for example, if she could be a baton twirler when she gets into high school. I explained that the clothes she would be asked to wear and possibly the routines would not be that which a christian could do and still represent godliness. I explained further that the Bible teaches that a christian must be modest in the wearing of their clothes so as not to emphasize the body but rather to emphasize a godly character. I Tym 2:9-10.

My daughter has also wanted to know what is wrong with long hair on men. I explained that the Bible has always insisted on a difference in appearance between men and women. I pointed out the Apostle Paul's inspired comments in I Cor 11:14-15, where he told the Corinthians that even nature should tell them that it is a shame for a man to have long hair like a woman. I also mentioned Deut. 22-5 where Moses says that men and women wearing each others clothes is an abomination unto God. These answers seemed to satisfy her curiosity.

Several weeks ago my family and I attended the homecoming at my Alma Mater, a major christian college. I attended the club breakfast and we all attended the class reunion and football game. For the most part it was an enjoyable weekend. Seeing old friends after ten years was quite enjoyable. The college had made many changes. There had been changes in the facilities and other changes for the better but all of these were overshadowed by the appearance of the student body. The campus seemed to be a sea of skin tight pants, mini skirts and long haired boys. I explained to my daughter that this was because of a lack of teaching in these students homes and not really the college's fault. This explanation was rendered useless however while at the ballgame we found that the college had added six micro-mini skirted baton twirlers to put on a leg show at the ballgame. It is no mystery that my daughter ask, "Daddy is this a Christian college?"

The concept of a christian college is a good one. I recommend that you do what you can to support one. Along with your support however insist on a high standard of morality. It is these high standards which make the extra expense of a christian education worthwhile.

Larry Price

Where Do You Fit?

We must all be conscious of our obligations! We recognize our privileges and opportunities and we must also be conscious of our obligations. Because we are redeemed we have responsibilities to our God and these comprise our obligations. There are many areas of our Christian life that could be discussed in relation to obligations, but just here think about the responsibility to give. There are at least four classes of givers that are clearly evident to the student of human nature and of the Word of God.

1. THE COVETOUS MAN WHO GIVES WITH REGRET. God knew that there would be this kind of person in the kingdom and therefore he has said: "Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (II Corinthians 9:7) This is the man who says, "Well, I have to give something, but I'm not going to enjoy it or do it without regret." Covetousness is, of course, a great sin and will cause one to be eternally lost. (I Corinthians 6:9-10) The man who gives with such an attitude is really giving unworthily or in an unworthy manner, and his giving is really doing him no good.

2. THE UNTEACHABLE—ONE WHO RESENTS TEACHING ABOUT GIVING. There are those, who at the very mention of the word "giving", close their ears and eyes to any teaching at all. Jesus said that these are people whose "heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed," (Matthew 13:15). They refuse teaching on the subject of giving and thus, their ears are stopped, their eyes are closed and their hearts wax gross. How much better it is to have eyes that see and ears that hear.

3. THE HONEST TRUTH SEEKER, UNTAUGHT, BUT TEACHABLE. It is comforting to know that there are also those who are honestly seeking the truth on every subject and when giving is spoken of they are teachable. They want to know why and how their giving might be pleasing and acceptable to God. They are taught then to abound in this grace also (II Corinthians 8:7).

4. THE LIBERAL GIVER—THE ONE TAUGHT AND WHO BELIEVES AND PRACTICES TRUTH ON THE MATTER. This man has been taught and understood that God loveth a cheerful giver. He has also learned that "he that giveth is to do so liberally" (Romans

12:8), and "For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not" (II Corinthians 8:12). His principle is based upon the promise of the Bible: "And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work . . ." (II Corinthians 9:8).

We all fit into one of these classes of givers. As you read and examine your own attitude, "WHERE DO YOU FIT?"

Paul W. Eubanks

The Art of Listening

To A Sermon

1. "Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord." (Ezekial 33:30)
2. "Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord." (Acts 10:33)
3. "Every eye in the synagogue was fixed upon him." (Luke 4:20)
4. "Be swift to hear". (James 1:19)
5. "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." (James 1:21)
6. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (I Peter 2:2)
7. "Holdfast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (II Tim. 1:13)
8. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." (James 1:22)
9. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom: teaching and admonishing one another in psalm and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Col. 3:16)
10. "But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word and understandeth it: which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." (Matt. 13:23)

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