

MARKET STREET



"And this the message we have received of Him, and declare unto you..." (1 John 1:5)

MESSENGER

Market Street church of Christ

514 West Market Street
P.O. Box 388
Athens, Alabama 35612
Phone (256) 232-1525

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Albert Bowers (256) 233-4847
Jerry McGlocklin (256) 232-7620
Kenneth Smith (256) 233-2050
Bonnie Sutton (256) 232-2081

Deacons

Marty Adams (256) 233-5147
Rusty Brand (256) 233-7343
Tim Craig (256) 233-4597
Joel Hamm (256) 230-6223
Bobby McGuire (256) 232-7887
Frank Noblitt (256) 777-0725
Stuart Wilson (256) 233-6291

Evangelists

David A. Cox (256) 233-8910
E-mail: david.a.cox@att.net
Warren Glass (256) 233-6086

Visit Us On The Web

MarketStreet-church.org

MARKET STREET MESSENGER

is published in the interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Market Street church.

David A. Cox, Editor

Volume I

February 1, 2009

No. 5

Can We Understand The Bible Alike?

David A. Cox

Often, very little attention is given to the question of division, but it remains a very serious matter. It is accepted by many due to the concept that we are not able to see or interpret the Bible alike. But the Bible can be and is expected to be understood alike. The apostle Paul told the Ephesians, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17). Many times, religious division is a result of those who have not studied the bible for themselves and have relied on others to tell them what the Bible teaches. This results in the following of what men say through their creeds, confessions of faith, disciplines, manuals, etc., rather than what the word of God has said.

Understood Alike or Is It a Matter of Interpretation?

First, consider the question, "Can the Bible be seen alike or does it depend upon each individual's interpretation?" It can be clearly seen in the New Testament that those in the first century understood the teaching they received alike. This is seen in the phrases such as "all that believed were together (Acts 2:44); "singleness of heart" (Acts 2:47); "multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul" (Acts 4:32). If they understood it alike, God expects us to also.

Unity of the believers is evidence that those who were taught understood the Bible alike. The Bible is very clear concerning the unity that should exist among those who profess to be Christians. In John 17:20-21, in Christ's prayer for his disciples, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Christ prayed that His disciples and those that are taught by the word, would be one. (This includes those taught in the first century, as well as, today.) This unity, for which Christ prayed, is commanded of those that follow Christ. Paul exhorted the Corinthians to be of the "same mind and the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). He further

told the Philippians "...let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Philippians 3:16). However, this unity is impossible to obtain while there are denominational bodies which teach conflicting doctrines from various creed books, but claim to be followers of Christ. In order to achieve the unity of which Paul was speaking of and Christ prayed for, we must all use the same standard as our authority in religious matters. We recognize this with regard to other facets of this life. If a man goes to build a house, would he not use the proper standard of measurement? If a lady is cooking a recipe, would she not follow the standard of measurement specified? The answer to the previous two questions is yes, of course. Those in the first century were united because they "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42). We have the same teachings; God's Word, the Bible.

The Divine Rule of Our Life

The Christians in the first century were united as they were taught the word of God and understood God's will for their lives. If the teaching of the apostles in the first century produced the kind of faith needed to be saved and taught the people then what would please God, why then do we not use the same divine standard and rule today? If we want to please God then that is what we must do. The only rule for our lives must be the divine rule of God.

What is taught in the Bible is very important. It cannot be looked upon as a cafeteria style of rule – take what one likes and leave behind what one does not like. The Bible is important because it teaches us "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). The Bible is God's inspired revelation to man, teaching what one must do to be faithful and pleasing to God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Titus 2:15). The apostle Paul made it clear to the Galatians that they should be able to understand the gospel that was taught and be able to recognize error, when it was taught (Galatians 1:6-9). To be able to recognize truth and error implies that the word of God can and must be understood alike.

Conclusion

Since the Bible can be understood alike, one should heed the exhortation of Paul to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God...rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). In doing this, one will be able to "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). We should not add anything to or take anything away from the

word of God (Revelation 22:18). May all recognize that when the divine rule is followed, there will be no division and we will see the Bible alike!

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Barely Saved

T. Doy Moyer

Christians need to have confidence that they are going to heaven. This confidence is based upon the faithfulness of God, who has promised eternal life (1 John 2:25). We can know that we have eternal life, and can therefore be confident of our salvation (1 John 5:13-14; 2:28, etc.). Of course, we understand our need to remain faithful to God. But the point remains: we can be confident of salvation, not because of who we are, and what we have done, but because of whom God is and what He has done on our behalf.

The Scriptures also teach that God's grace has been abundantly given to us. He has "freely bestowed" and "lavished" His grace upon us (Ephesians 1:6-8). His grace is more than sufficient to cover our sins; His grace does not just barely do the job. Further, we are taught that if we will add to our lives the godly virtues, growing in the grace and knowledge of God, we will remain in God's favor and be supplied with an abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord (2 Peter 1:5-11). We need to be impressed with this: "for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you" (vs. 11). Notice: "abundantly supplied." No indication here of being just barely saved. If we are going to heaven at all, then it will be with an abundant entrance.

Now here's the problem. I have heard some question the assurance of salvation by going to 1 Peter 4:18. The King James Version says, "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" From this wording, one can draw the conclusion that we will only be "scarcely" or "barely" saved. The problem with viewing this Scripture this way is that it

contradicts the other passages already cited. If God's grace is so great, and if our entrance into the eternal kingdom will be so abundant, then how can it also be true that we will be "scarcely" saved?

The answer is found in the context of 1 Peter 4. Peter is speaking of the suffering that Christians will endure while on earth. Since Christ suffered, Christians need to be armed with the same purpose (vs. 1). We will be different from the world, and this will bring friction and persecution. Peter wrote, "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing" (vs. 12). Then, "if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed, but in that name let him glorify God" (vs. 16). Suffering persecution was a trial for the Christians. They had to endure it and come through it so that they could be saved. Now note verses 17-19 (NASB):

"For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; And if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right."

The judgment is the testing or trials through which Christians pass. They help determine the character and faithfulness of the ones going through it. If such sufferings will be difficult for Christians, who have God on their side, then how can the disobedient deal with the calamities that are sure to come to them? If trials and tribulations will come upon God's household, then what will ultimately befall those who have spurned God?

The idea, therefore, of being saved "with difficulty" is that there are perils and trails that could obstruct our faithfulness to God. It will not be an easy walk in the park. We must overcome these trials and persevere to the end. That's what Peter is trying to encourage. This is similar to what Paul told the brethren as he and Barnabas were "strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Salvation would come through difficulty and tribulation.

Salvation will still be abundant. God's grace is still great and more than sufficient for us. But there will be difficult times to overcome. We need to learn how

to deal with such trials, knowing that if we continue faithfully to the end, we will have an abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom. Further, if God allows these things to try us as Christians, then think of what the end will be of the ungodly. The fact that the righteous are allowed to suffer argues that the disobedient will have no hope at all, for God has promised to visit eternal punishment upon them (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

These passages serve to encourage our perseverance and faithfulness to our Lord. We look forward to heaven, and this gives us the courage to make it through this life. Therefore, let us commit our souls to the faithful Creator in doing what is right.

-via *College View Columns*; Florence, Alabama.

News & Notes

THE SICK:

In The Hospital:

Yvonne Sherbert; Huntsville Hospital, – ICU

Jerry Tucker; Athens-Limestone Hospital – ICU

At Home:

Wendell Sherbert Annie Mae Bragg

Jerry Gilbert Mary Norton

Carl Hargrave Gladys Johnson

Casey Fendley Curtis Glass

Kim Rogers Mot Beasley

Peggy Taylor Jeff Waddell

Mike Sherbert Ashton White

Uyles Reed Kennedy Pepper

Angela Green Lucy Clanton

Limestone Health Facility:

Essie Belle Bates, rm. 108 Jerry Tucker rm. 99

Rosella Pugh, rm. 33 Mary Smith, rm 85

J.D. Clanton, 11E

Athens Convalescent Center:

Betty Bates, rm. 17

Mae Alesi, rm. 35

Limestone Manor:

Ruth Owens , rm. 80

Limestone Lodge:

Lifford Abernathy , rm. 28-E

Shut-In:

Sarah Halbrook, Glade Retirement, Memphis, Tenn.

Jimmy Killen, at home

Clara Lewis, at home

Reba Adams, at home

Mauvis Phillips, at home

Majorie Lambert, at home

Fred Varnell, at home

Ellis Dunnavant, at home

MILITARY SERVICE: Remember all those that are away serving in the military for our country. Those among us that are serving away from home:

Cody Brown; Iraq

SYMPATHY: We want to express our deepest sympathy to *Ashley Goosen* and all the family in the passing of *Janet Goosen*, Ashley's wife. Ashley is one of the men that we support in preaching the gospel in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. May the Lord bless this family at this time.

SINGING: The *Oakland church* will have a singing on Saturday evening, February 7th at 7:00 p.m.

BIBLE DRILL: This afternoon we will be meeting at 4:30 p.m. in the small auditorium for the Children's Bible Drill. I hope that all of our children will be able to be present at this time.

DUTY ROSTERS: If you have not turned in a duty roster yet, please be sure to get a form and fill it out today and turn it in to *Rusty Brand* or *Joel Hamm*.

THE RECORD: Attendance – Week of January 25th

Sunday: Bible Classes..... 123
Morning Worship 152
Evening Worship..... 122

Wednesday: Bible Classes..... 93

Remember Our Study Periods

Sunday Mornings at 9:45 a.m.

Wednesday Evenings at 7:00 p.m.

Come and Join Us As We Study Together

Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, February 1st:

Morning Worship

Announcements Stuart Wilson
Song Leader Frank Noblitt
Prayer Rusty Brand
Preaching David Cox
Lord's Supper
Presiding Albert Bowers
Assisting Bonnie Sutton
Serving Delmer Carter..... Larry Mitchell
..... Marvin Putman..... Tommy Burns
Closing Prayer Landon Adams

Evening Worship

Announcements Stuart Wilson
Song Leader Frank Noblitt
Prayer Joel Hamm
Preaching David Cox
Lord's Supper Albert Bowers
Closing Prayer Nathaniel Adams

Other Assignments for Sunday February 1st:

Usher Dwaine Allfrey
Work Sound System Tim Craig

Wednesday, February 4th:

Song Leader Jerry McGlocklin
Bible Reading (Proverbs 6:1-19)
..... Marty Adams
Prayer Jack Cannon
Invitation TBA
Closing Prayer Jimmy Usery

Sunday, February 8th:

Morning Worship

Announcements Jerry McGlocklin
Song Leader Stuart Wilson
Prayer Kenneth Smith
Preaching Warren Glass
Lord's Supper
Presiding Rusty Brand
Assisting Dwaine Allfrey
Serving David Terry Tyler Cox
..... Nathaniel Adams..... Ronnie Locke
Closing Prayer Jimmy Usery

Evening Worship

Announcements Jerry McGlocklin
Song Leader Stuart Wilson
Prayer Wayne Vaughn
Preaching David Cox
Lord's Supper Rusty Brand
Closing Prayer Tommy Burns

Other Assignments for Sunday February 8th:

Usher Raymond Brown
Work Sound System Cory Nelson