**Can we understand the Bible alike?**

**Introduction**

1. In the wake of doctrinal differences, some among the brethren have subscribed to the idea that we cannot understand the Bible alike, and God does not expect us to.
   1. This is used as an excuse to maintain fellowship and unity despite diverse beliefs on admittedly difficult subjects. (EX: MDR)
   2. However, such a position is simply a way out of diligent Bible study, and honest introspection.
2. The idea that the Bible cannot be understood the same by a multiplicity of people is foreign to scripture.
3. This approach to scripture has bled through the body of Christ, causing many to assume the Bible cannot be understood alike, and it does not have to be.
4. Can we understand the Bible alike?
5. The Bible says we can, and must!
6. Understand the Revelation
   1. **Ephesians 5:17** – Understanding God’s will as a command of God.
      1. How can we possibly know what God wants?
      2. **1 Corinthians 2:10-12** – God revealed His will through the HS – “***that we might know”***
   2. **Ephesians 5:17-19** – know the will of the Lord by being filled with the Spirit – in singing. (**cf. Colossians 3:16** – Word of Christ dwells in us in singing spiritual songs.)
   3. **Revealed through the apostles:**
      1. **Ephesians 3:3-5** – made ***“known”*** through revelation.
      2. **Revelation** – *apokalypsis* – a laying bare, making naked; a disclosure of truth, instruction, concerning divine things before unknown. (Thayer)
      3. ***“by which, when you read, YOU MAY UNDERSTAND”***
   4. **Can know/understand:**
      1. ***“those who believe and know the truth” (1 Timothy 4:3).***
      2. ***“they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 2:20).***
      3. ***“those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit” (Hebrews 6:4).***
      4. ***“we have received the knowledge of the truth” (Hebrews 10:26).***
   5. **MUST know/understand:**
      1. **John 8:31-36** – Necessary to know truth to be set free from sin, and become a disciple.
      2. **2 Timothy 2:15** – Must be able to know/understand/rightly divide truth to be approved to God.
      3. **1 Thessalonians 5:21-22** – How do we know evil and good? Understanding the Bible.
7. Understand Alike
   1. Some have the idea that we can know and understand the Bible, but not “alike.”
      1. This comes from the post-modern thought of a relative truth.
      2. However, truth by its very nature is objective – truth is truth.
      3. **Therefore, if we can understand the Bible, we can understand it alike – because it means what God intended to convey, and only that.**
   2. **God requires us to understand the Bible alike:**
      1. **1 Corinthians 1:10-13** – The Corinthians were admonished for their divisiveness. *(God does not require something of us that is impossible to achieve.)*
      2. **1 Corinthians 3:3-4** – Division and differences are manifestations of carnality.
      3. **Ephesians 4:3, 11-13** – Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit.
         1. The gifts given by Jesus **(v. 11)** are toward the end of maintaining such unity – i.e. understanding the Bible alike, and practicing it the same.
         2. **Cf. Nehemiah 8:7-12** (Ezra reads Law) – Illustration of such occurring. Did they understand alike? YES! (Wept – because understood they had not been keeping the law.)
8. Differences exist, but why?
9. Differences Exist
   1. **Differences between Pharisees and Sadducees:**
      1. **Acts 23:6-9** (Paul before the Sanhedrin) – from the same scriptures, the two parties came away with different conclusions.
      2. Did such matter? Were both right? Both cannot be right, only one can. (Pharisees in this case.)
      3. **Matthew 22:23-33** – Sadducees test Jesus:
         1. **(vv. 23-28)** – Hypothetical raised in attempt to show the folly of resurrection doctrine.
         2. **(vv. 29-32)** – Jesus’ response:
            1. **(v. 29)** – Don’t know scriptures (they speak of a resurrection).

Why don’t they know them?

***“nor the power of God”*** – assume resurrection is of the same nature as the perishing body. *That God cannot raise them to a different nature.*

* + - * 1. **(v. 30)** – Marriage is a physical thing, but the resurrection is not.
        2. **(vv. 31-32)** – Scriptures taught concerning resurrection.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had already died – speaking to Moses.

**If God is the God of the living, there must be a resurrection to bring them back.**

* + - * 1. **(v. 33)** – astonished because their error was exposed.
    1. **Pharisees were mistaken as well:**
       1. **Matthew 22:41-46** – The Christ is the Son of God – scriptures teach this.
       2. **How did they not know?** – PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS about the Christ which precluded them from reaching that conclusion.
          1. Apostles reached this understanding **–** ***“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16).***
          2. **Cf. Romans 1:3-4** – Not just Son of David, but Son of God – resurrection showed this. **(David prophesied concerning the resurrection of the Christ – cf. Acts 2**)
  1. The scriptures are sometimes understood differently, ***but not because they cannot be understood alike.***

1. Why do they exist?
   1. **Dull Hearts** (**cf. Matthew 13:10-17** – why speak in parables?):
      1. **(vv. 11-12)** – They know because they ***“have,”*** and are given ***“more.”*** What do they have?
      2. **(vv. 13-15)** – They do not see, hear, and understand because they do not want to – fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy.
         1. ***“lest they should”*** – they are keeping themselves from seeing truth.
         2. **They don’t want to see truth.**
      3. **(vv. 16-17)** – The disciples wanted the truth, the same way the prophets did, but to them it was not revealed. (**I.e. it is being revealed, and because you want to know, YOU WILL.**)
   2. **Blinded Minds** (**cf. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4**) – succumb to the ploys of Satan.
   3. **Seared Consciences** (**cf. 1 Timothy 4:1-2)** – knowingly depart from truth, and practice/teach error until they are ***“past feeling” (Ephesians 4:19).***
   4. **Desire for the Flesh** (**cf. 2 Peter 2:18-19; Jude 4**) – would rather fulfill lusts of the flesh than walk in truth, so convince themselves the scripture teaches something it does not.
2. How can we understand the Bible alike?
3. Honest Truth Seeking
4. Honesty – ***“Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24); “Increase our faith” (Luke 17:5).***
5. **Matthew 7:7-11** – If we seek, we will find.
6. **(vv. 9-10)** – God will not give us something different than the truth if the truth is what we are seeking.
7. Faith in God’s Revelation
   1. **Acts 17:26-28** – God created us to know Him, and wants us to know Him.
   2. **2 Corinthians 4:6** – God has revealed Himself through Jesus.
      1. This is as distinctly, and availably seen as the separation between light and darkness.
      2. **Do we believe God has adequately revealed Himself?**
8. Constant Introspection
   1. **2 Corinthians 13:5** – Constantly test whether our beliefs coincide with scripture, and we are living that way.
   2. **2 Timothy 2:15** – Requires diligent study.
9. If not, who is at fault?
10. If we claim that we cannot understand the Bible alike, God is put at fault.
11. **Revelation is not adequate?** – God gave us a faulty revelation of Himself.
12. **Man is not created to adequately understand the revelation?** – God created us insufficiently.
13. GOD IS NOT AT FAULT! WE CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE ALIKE.

**Conclusion**

1. God has given us the Bible so that we can know Him, and serve Him acceptably.
2. We must have faith that we can understand the Bible, and understand it alike.
3. **If we do not believe this, we put God at fault, and leave ourselves in an unwinnable situation.**