

## Thinking We Cannot Understand the Bible

The apostle Paul wrote,

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Yet, the attitude some have toward Bible study would indicate that Paul's words in this passage were meaningless. While some would say that understanding the Bible is a noble objective, they would also argue that it is essentially impossible. Yet, Paul tells us that the Bible was penned specifically for us to understand and apply! A few have even argued that, because man is so low, it is impossible for him to understand the things of God. However, this does not exhibit humility; it denies the power of God. Do we really believe that God created a being that he wished to communicate with but was not able to do so? Also, God himself reveals the fact that some things will remain unknown to us because he does not reveal them (Deuteronomy 29:29), but does this not imply that what he reveals we can know and understand? "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Corinthians 14:33).

Another segment of people would alter this objection only slightly, claiming that while it is possible to understand the Bible, it is not possible for us to understand the Bible alike. This view really teaches that it is possible for us to misunderstand the Bible, but not to understand it. God, by his very nature, could only have one meaning in mind when he inspired the Scriptures. Any interpretations of his words besides the one he intended are erroneous (Matthew 22:29-32). Only one view is acceptable because truth, by its nature, is not relative, biblically or otherwise. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Spiritual freedom comes through understanding and applying the religious truth revealed in the Word of God (John 17:17). If you cannot understand it, you cannot be free.

Unfortunately, many people would rather claim that the Bible cannot be understood than make the diligent effort necessary to understand it (2 Timothy 2:15). In actuality, they are spiritually lazy, not willing to make any effort to understand something if they do not comprehend it fully at the first hearing (Matthew 13:9). Others use this excuse when the truth revealed would require them to change their way of life (Matthew 13:10-17). When the Jewish leaders asked Jesus, "By what authority doest thou these things" (Matthew 21:23), he replied by presenting a logical dilemma to them. In other words, God, in the flesh, revealed the truth to them. But they replied, "We cannot tell" (Matthew 21:27). However, the previous verses revealed that they knew the logical conclusion all too well; they just did not like it. Like these Jews, many people deny that it is possible to understand what God has said, but the problem lies in their hearts -- not in God's Word. You can understand the Bible, and we can all understand the Bible alike. But we must prepare our hearts to accept truth and diligently work toward that end (Ezra 7:10).

*By Kevin Rhodes*