

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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The Bible is Fitted to Man

Though many people have a high regard for the Bible, the greater majority still believes that the Bible is a book so filled with mystery that it cannot be understood. Even in reading simple verses, some have a tendency to look for hidden meanings. Because of the belief that the Bible is a mysterious book which cannot be understood, some people have just given up any hope of comprehending the Bible and do not even attempt to read it.

In addition to this, some men attribute our religious divisions to the inability of men to understand the Bible or to understand it alike. Consequently, there has grown up a disposition in religion which states that if a person thinks something is right for him to do, it is right for him. Each person is entitled to his own belief and no one should try to persuade any other person that what he believes is wrong.

My friends, these sentiments are not so. The Bible is not a mysterious book which cannot be understood; a thing is not right just because a man believes that it is right; God is not obligated to accept a man's religion just because he is sincere and honest; our religious divisions do not come as a result of man's inability to understand the Bible. We need to back up and consider some of the very basic facts revealed to us by God in His holy Word.

God Made Man As He Is

Maybe this seems ridiculous to state at this point in this discussion of this subject but it is necessary. We must begin with this fact: God created man. The early chapters of Genesis state, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He

created them Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7).

In this discussion, we must begin with the proposition that man is a product of divine creation. He is not the product of billions of years of chance evolution; he is the product of divine creation. Hence, God made man as he is. The way we think, eat, sleep, drink, etc. were all designed by God.

God Made The Bible As It Is

The second point which we need to carefully remember is that God made the Bible as it is. The writers of the Bible were working under divine inspiration when they penned their words. Speaking of how Scripture originated, Peter said, "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Pet. 1:20-21). The Bible came into being because God wanted it written and not because some men decided that religion should have a holy book.

"The Old Testament alone affirms 3,808 times that it is transmitting the very words of God" (Rene Pache, *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture*, p. 37). On countless occasions, the prophet would begin by saying, "The word of the Lord came to me saying... " If the Bible is not the product of divine inspiration, it is literally filled with lies. There can be no middle ground; the Bible is either the word of God Almighty or it is a book of lies.

Hence, we are forced to the conclusion that God made the Bible as it is. The Bible is not the chance development of years of religious evolution; it is not a cunningly devised fable. It is the work of God; He made the Bible just as it is.

The Bible and Man

The Bible which was made by God was prepared for man who was created by God. It is designed to be man's compass to find his way through life (Jer. 10:23; Psa. 119:105); it contains all that pertains to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3-4); it is man's complete and final guide in all religious matters (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Inasmuch as God is the author of the Bible and the creator of man, if the two do not fit each other the fault lies with God. Either one of two things is true if man cannot understand the Bible. Either, God was not able to make the Bible understandable to man, in which case He is not omnipotent or He chose not to make the Bible understandable to man, in which case He is not good. Because God has conditioned salvation upon a knowledge of

the truth (Jn. 8:32), He is not a good God if man cannot understand the truth. Because I am unwilling to admit either of these propositions about God, I am forced to conclude that man can understand God's divine revelation.

This is perfectly consistent with the claims of the Bible. Paul said, ". . . understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). Earlier, he told the Ephesians that they could understand God's revelation by reading what he had written (Eph. 3:1-5). Hence, one can understand God's revelation if he will read and study it. I would like to demonstrate that man can understand the Bible by considering some of the facts, promises and commandments of the Bible which are easily understood. Consider the following:

1. Facts to be believed. The author of the book of Hebrews wrote, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (11:6). Faith is the belief of certain facts. First, one must believe that God is. That is not hard to understand or incomprehensible. Anybody can believe that fact. Other simple facts which everyone must believe include the following: (a) God created all of this world (Gen. 1); (b) Jesus is the Son of God (Mt. 16:16); (c) Jesus died for our sins (Mt. 26:28); (d) He was raised from the dead on the third day following His death and burial. No one has any trouble comprehending these propositions; he may not believe them but he has no trouble understanding them. Hence, man can understand the facts which he must believe in order to be saved.

2. Promises to be enjoyed. The promises of the gospel induce men to believe and obey it: The promises of the gospel are easily understood. Jesus said, "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned" (Mk. 16:16). The promise is easily understood; Jesus promised to save every man who believes and is baptized. The salvation which he promised is from our sins (Mt. 1:21). Furthermore, He has promised everlasting life (Jn. 3:16) in which we will dwell with the Father to the obedient believer (Rev. 21:3). These promises are not hard to understand. Admittedly, many do not believe them but that has nothing to do with their ability to understand them.

3. Commands to obey. The gospel also contains some commandments which must be obeyed. For example, Peter told those believing Jews on the day of Pentecost that there were some commandments which they had to obey in order to be saved; he said, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Who can misunderstand these commandments? Repentance and baptism are commandments from God which must be obeyed before the individual can receive the forgiveness of his sins.

Here is another sampling of Christ's commandments: "Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth, each one of you, with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear" (Eph. 4:25-29).

From these examples, we can easily see that the Bible is easily understood by any man who wants to obey the Father in Heaven. The problems which confront men religiously have nothing whatsoever to do with his inability to understand what God demands of him. Rather, the problems of men religiously stem from lack of faith rather than a lack of understanding. Men simply lack sufficient faith to do what God says.

- Mike Willis, Truth Magazine, August 4, 1977

COULD IT BE.....

...that people reject the Bible – not because it contradicts itself, but because it contradicts them?

...that some brethren do not attend various worship periods and Bible study classes because Christ is not really their “first love?”

...that Satan has lulled us into thinking that we are really standing, when indeed, we are ready to fall?

...we utterly abhor the violence going on in the world, yet do not think twice about what our families entertain themselves with on television and at the movies?

...that some brethren honestly see no connection between commitment, attendance, and involvement?

- unknown

> "Character is not made in crisis, it is only exhibited!"

> "If Christ means much to you then live so He will mean much to others!"

- > "Never doubt in the dark what God told you in the light!"
 - > "When you face the Son the shadows will fall behind you!"
 - > "Seek Christ and you will find Him, and with Him you will find everything else you've been looking for!"
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*Who Is God?*" (Text: Jer. 9:23-24); Sunday evening: *Bi-monthly Singing* (Theme: *The Good News!*).