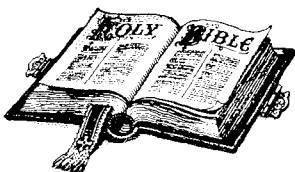


THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

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IS IT POSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND GOD'S WILL?

Christians teach that **"It is possible for men to understand God's will for them."** However, many people are of the opinion that the Bible is such a difficult Book that it is impossible for us to understand what it teaches. This idea may lead some people to think it is not profitable to study the Scriptures. Dear readers, let us now consider some interesting facts:

1. People in the Old Testament **UNDERSTOOD** God's Law. Nehemiah 8:8 says: **"So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the same, and caused them to UNDERSTAND THE READING."** NOTE: The reading was from the word of God. They **understood God's Word!**

2. The Psalmist said unto God: **Through thy precepts I get UNDERSTANDING; therefore I hate every false way,** (Psalms 119:104), and **"the entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth UNDERSTANDING unto the simple."** (Psalms 119:130). NOTE: The Psalmist received **understanding through the precepts of God.**

3. In Matthew 15:10 we read that Jesus **"called the multitude, and said unto them, HEAR AND UNDERSTAND."** (Also see Mark 7:14-16).

4. God **"will have all men to be saved and to come unto the KNOWLEDGE of the truth."** (See 1 Timothy 2:4). NOTE: The only way men can receive the knowledge of the truth is by learning it from the Scriptures. It

is found nowhere else.

5. Paul said: **"If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, YE MAY UNDERSTAND my knowledge in the mystery of Christ."** (Eph. 3:2-4). NOTE: Paul wrote what he received by revelation so we may read and understand.

6. Paul said: **"Brethren, be not unwise, but UNDERSTANDING what the will of the Lord is."** (Eph. 5:17) NOTE: Would Paul command something that is impossible?

7. Paul said: **"Brethren, be not children in UNDERSTANDING: . . . but in UNDERSTANDING be men."** (1 Cor. 14:20). NOTE: We aren't children. We are men! We should be men in understanding!

8. Paul said: **"Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee UNDERSTANDING in all things."** (2 Timothy 2:7). NOTE: In order for us to receive understanding of the Lord, we must consider what Paul and other inspired men of God have spoken. What they have spoken is found in the Scriptures.

9. God would not command us to **UNDERSTAND HIS WILL** if it were impossible to do so!

Yes, it is possible for men to understand the will of God for them.

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THE INSTRUCTOR

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Editorial - - -

"RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH"

Although from childhood, Timothy had **"Known the holy Scriptures"**, (2 Tim. 3:15), and at the time of Paul's letters to him, he had **"unfeigned faith"**, (2 Tim. 1:5), the apostle Paul wrote and admonished him: **"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH."** (2 Tim. 2:15). God does not approve of those who do not give diligence enough to **RIGHTLY DIVIDE** the word of God. Such a person ought to be ashamed. It is a certain fact that one can not **properly divide** God's Word if he does not study.

The Bible is an inspired Book! (See 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Eph. 3:2-6). It consists of 66 books with two major divisions— the Old Testament and the New Testament. In a general way, the Old Testament Scriptures cover a period from the creation of the earth and its inhabitants until about 400 years before the birth of Christ. The New Testament Scriptures cover a period from the birth of Jesus Christ until about the close of the first century.

Approximately 40 men wrote the Bible over a period of about 1500 years; yet when compiled, their writings make a complete and harmonious Book! A marvel indeed! But to understand it, we must **"rightly divide"** it.

In order for us to **rightly divide** the Bible, we must understand that there are three

major dispensations or periods of time. **First**, the "Patriarchal" age which embraced about 2500 years—from the creation of man to the giving of the law through Moses. **Secondly**, the "Mosaic" age which embraced about 1500 years—from the giving of the law through Moses to the cross of Jesus Christ. **Thirdly**, the "Gospel" age or the "last days" which so far have lasted more than 1900 years—from the day of Pentecost (as mentioned in Acts 2) until now and will continue to the end of time.

It is important that we recognize these various periods of time if we would **"rightly divide"** the word of truth. We do not live in either the "Patriarchal" or "Mosaic" age, but we live in the "last days", i.e., the "Gospel" age. Thus we must learn, believe and submit to the teaching of Jesus Christ as revealed in the New Testament which is the "perfect law of liberty." (James 1:25). It will judge us in the last day. (See John 12:48; James 2:12).

A person can not be **"approved unto God"** unless he studies (gives diligence) enough to **"rightly divide the word of truth."** (2 Tim. 2:15). It is certainly true that **"all Scripture is given by inspiration of God"**, (2 Tim. 3:16), but it is not true that we are under the Old Testament today. Many people fail to recognize that **"the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."** (John 1:17).

There are many commands given as recorded in the Bible that were not intended for us today to obey. For example, the command in Gen. 6:14 to **"Make thee an ark of gopher wood..."** was given to Noah and was never intended for anyone else. The command in Gen. 22:2 to **"Take now thy son... and offer him there for a burnt offering..."** was given to Abraham. It was not given for us to obey. The ten commandments, **as such**, which included the command to **"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy"** were given to the children of Israel who at one time were in Egypt in bondage and God brought them out, (See Exo. 20:1-23; Deut. 5:1-22), but were not intended to govern us in the **"last days."** The commands of Jesus to **"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils..."** in Matt. 10:8 were given to His twelve apostles during His personal ministry, but were not intended to extend to us today. Although some people of John's generation were promised Holy Spirit baptism, (Matthew 3:10-12), there is nothing to indicate that Holy Spirit baptism was

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CAN A CHRISTIAN SWEAR BY FAITH?

Sincere believers are interested in walking by faith, (See 2 Cor. 5:7), because they realize that **"the just shall live by faith."** (See Rom. 1:17). Since **"faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,"** (Rom. 10:17), no one can **walk by faith** unless he hears the Word of God.

There are some people who claim that **"it is right to take judicial oaths."** Is this **"of faith?"** Can a person **"swear"** BY FAITH? What does God's Word teach? Let us consider the following:

I. JESUS said: **"...Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is His footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."** (Matthew 5:34-37).

II. JAMES said: **"But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest you fall into condemnation."** (James 5:12).

III. OBSERVATIONS:

- A. Jesus plainly said: **"SWEAR NOT AT ALL**
- B. Jesus plainly said: **"BUT LET YOUR COMMUNICATION BE, YEA, YEA: NAY, NAY."**
- C. Jesus plainly said: **"FOR WHATSOEVER IS MORE THAN THESE (i.e., Yea, yea; and Nay, nay) COMETH OF EVIL."** **Note:** Judicial oaths are **"MORE THAN THESE!"** Therefore, they **"COMETH OF EVIL."**
- D. James plainly said: **"BUT ABOVE ALL THINGS, ...SWEAR NOT..."**
- E. James plainly said: **"...NEITHER BY ANY OTHER OATH."**
- F. James plainly said: **"BUT LET YOUR YEA BE YEA: AND YOUR NAY, NAY: LEST YOU FALL INTO CONEDMNA-TION."**
- G. **Question:** How could God's Word be any plainer on this point?

(Continue in right column)

- H. If God's Word does not prohibit a Christian from taking judicial oaths, please tell us what the Lord could have said which would have prohibited such?

IV. FURTHER OBSERVATIONS:

- A. Instead of trying to interpret these plain passages in the light of some more difficult passages, why not interpret the more difficult passages in the light of these plain passages.
- B. Since the civil law of our country does not demand that we take judicial oaths, isn't it an infallibly safe course for Christians to refuse to take such oaths?

No, a Christian can not swear BY FAITH! God's law prohibits swearing!

(CRS)

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RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH

intended for all believers. It was limited and provisional. In Acts 1:1-8 Jesus specifically promised the apostles Holy Spirit baptism. Luke records the fact that Cornelius and his household received it in Acts 10 and 11. There is no record of anyone else ever receiving Holy Spirit baptism. We are misapplying the Scriptures if we claim that these verses (Matt. 3:10-11) teach that believers **today** are to receive Holy Spirit baptism. By A.D. 64, there was only **one** baptism. (Eph. 4:4-6). This was obviously water baptism that was commanded by Jesus in the great commission. (See Matt. 28:18-20).

Jesus took away the first covenant or testament that He might establish the second. (See Heb. 10:9-10). We are under the New Testament today. (See Heb. 8:7-13—. It is the perfect law of liberty by which we shall be judged. (See James 1:25; 2:12). In contrast with the Old Testament that was dedicated with animal blood, the New Testament was dedicated with the blood of Jesus Christ. (See Heb. 9:11-22). To be saved by His blood, we must meet the terms of His Testament. (See Heb. 9:16-17; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-47).

Unless you are willing to **"study"** you will not be able to **rightly divide** the word of truth and be saved eternally.

(CRS)

IS IT POSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND GOD'S WILL?

In fact, unless we do understand it we can not believe and obey it. If we do not believe and obey it, we can not be saved eternally. Our Lord said: **"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."** (Matt. 7:21). The Hebrew writer said: **"And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."** (Heb. 5:9).

Do you understand God's plan of salvation? Do **you** understand that sinners must **believe**, (John 20: 30-31), **repent**, (Acts 17:30), **confess faith in Jesus Christ**, (Romans 10:9-10), and **be baptized for the remission of sins**, (Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21; Gal. 3:26-27; Mark 16:15-16). If **you understand** God's Word, **do you believe it? Have you obeyed it from the heart?** Why do you wait?

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PROVERBS 11:22: **"As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion."**

SUTTON-SHARP DEBATE

A series of public discussions is scheduled to be conducted on Sept. 18, 19, 21 & 22, 1978 at 7:30 each evening. It will be conducted in the building of the **East Albertville Church of Christ** at 1107 Highway 431 South, in Albertville, Alabama. The disputants will be Tom Sharp, a United Pentecostal Church preacher, of Florence, Alabama and Carrol R. Sutton of Albertville.

The subject to be discussed is **Holy Spirit Baptism**. Do people today receive Holy Spirit Baptism? Tom Sharp says **yes**. Carrol R. Sutton says **no**. What does the Bible say?

Make your plans to be with us. For accommodations please contact Carrol R. Sutton, 1103 Edmondson St., Albertville, AL. 35950., Phone 878-0920.

THE HILL-SUTTON DEBATE

We are still waiting for the **"elders"** of the Hobbs St. Church in Athens to **"honor"** their commitment or to apologize for making it or to state that they no longer believe what they agreed to affirm. They are **"honor bound"** to do one of the above things. Don't you agree?

Sentence Sermons

Works without faith are as dead as faith without works.

A sharp tongue may sever a good friendship.

You will never get lost on the strait and narrow road.

The Christ we will not share we can not keep.

To thine own self be true and thou canst not be false to any man.

Most people are carrying more luggage than they will ever get through the gate of heaven.

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