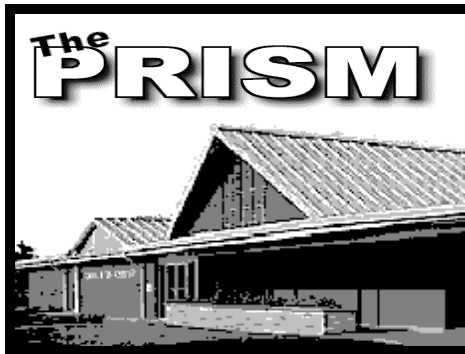




Sunshine Church of Christ

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Vol. 39 — Issue 31

Can We Understand The Bible Alike?

"Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." — Ephesians 5:15-17 NASV

Recently a preacher raised the question: **Can we all understand the Bible alike?** He declared that we cannot, and asserted that those who believe that we can are simply entertaining an ignorant viewpoint.

Your Understanding - My Understanding

The claim is frequently made: You understand the Bible one way, and I understand it another. Neither of us should condemn the other. Another variation of the same tune is this: Well, that is your interpretation of the Scriptures. I have mine as well. Perhaps both of us are right. These statements contain a **logical contradiction**. There is no such thing as **"understanding the Bible differently."** If two people differ on the meaning of a Biblical text, one of them is wrong about the matter — possibly both. We might **"misunderstand"** something differently, but we do not **"understand"** something differently.

Moreover, a passage does not yield two different interpretations; somewhere, there is a **"misinterpretation"**.

Can God Make Himself Understood?

We operate daily upon the presumption that we, frail mortals though we are, can make ourselves understood to our peers. A department store places an advertisement in the newspaper about an upcoming sale. Hundreds of people flock to the same establishment on the correct day at the right time expecting specific items at a certain price to be available for purchase. How is it that they **understand the ad alike?**

A recipe is printed on a cereal box for oat bran muffins. Hundreds of ladies across the country follow it and bake delicious muffins for their families. Do they **understand the instructions alike?**

A physician prescribes an antibiotic for someone with the flu, do we believe that the pharmacist **will understand** what the doctor has prescribed, and are we confident that **we can understand** the instructions for taking the medicine?

Continued on page 3



For our national leaders and world leaders as they lead their respective nations.

For our troops in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Korea, Iraq, Liberia, Haiti and other places.

For the lost in our families and community.

For the ban on partial birth abortion to stand as law.

For marriage to stand in our laws as God ordained it.

For the church in Siliguri and Naresh Chetri Edna Gampp is back at The Riverbend House, but not feeling so well, please remember her in your prayers.

Praise Report: Gabriel Gammon is out of ICU and now weighs 4.5 lbs. He will remain in step-down for about one more month.

Darlene Reed has been diagnosed with cancer and needs our prayers.

Betty Rase (June Book's Mother) has not been well and is in need of our prayers.

Jim Coy and family.

Doris Crawford (Troy Crawford's grandmother-Troy is Marta Brown's son-in-law) whose medical report shows spots on her liver.

Price Gammon (our Price Gammon's uncle and brother to Bill Gammon) is scheduled for triple bypass heart surgery tomorrow at Grant Hospital.

COMING EVENTS

- Aug. 8-11 - **Pine Gap gospel meeting**
- Sep. 3-5 - **Summit Rally in Columbus**
- Sep. 14-16 - **Ft. Hill Senior Retreat**
- Sep. 18 - **Ft. Hill Golf Scramble**
- Sep. 24-25 - **Round Lake Retreat & Golf Scramble**
- Oct. 1-2 - **Annual Leaders Retreat**
- Oct. 3-5 - **Willard Tate Meeting**
- Oct. 17 - **Sunday PM Home Groups begin**

Teen Devo

Tuesday, 6:30 pm. @ Terry & Debbie's.

Baby Shower

You are invited to a baby shower for Evan & Leslie Allison, 2:30 p.m., Sunday, August 15, 2004 at Rhonda Berry's house (xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx). I am making a "words of wisdom about raising kids" quilt for baby Logan Tyler. Please call me if you are able to attend and I need your "words of wisdom" by August 10th.

820-3989.

— Rhonda Berry



Scheduled Bible Study Texts

Sunday	Wednesday
8/8 Mt 6	8/11 Job 38-41
8/15 Mt 7	8/18 Job 42:1-17
8/22 Lk 7:1-35	8/25 Prov 1-17
8/29 Lk 7:36-8:3	

Scheduled texts and teachers through the end of the year are posted on the church web page.

Thank You

From the family of **Edna McLaughlin** for the many kindnesses and prayers and visits during her illness and passing. The cards are posted on the bulletin board.

Pots, Pans, Dishes--Last Call

If you have been looking for your favorite pot or pan and have not been able to find it lately, go by the kitchen area in the Annex and take a look, it may have been left here after one of our meals.

Summit

A group will be going to the Summit Rally at the Columbus Convention Center on Saturday, Sept. 4th. Speakers include Patrick Meade and Jeff Walling. See Terry Sullivan for more details.

Can We Understand The Bible Alike? —Continued from page 1

If we can sensibly operate our lives on a routine basis, recognizing that we are able to communicate with one another in an intelligible fashion, why can't we acknowledge that God, who is infinitely wiser and abler than man, can clearly make His will known to humanity?

If one suggests that Jehovah could not clearly make Himself known to man, he reflects upon the power of the Lord. If one argues that God purposely did not reveal Himself to mankind in a lucid fashion, he reflects upon the benevolence of his Maker. If one contends that man has no responsibility to understand and to obey the precepts of the Scriptures, it is he who evidences great ignorance of his obligation to Heaven.

What Saith The Scripture?

The Bible is replete with passages which have as their underlying basis the assumption that we can uniformly understand our divine responsibility as made known in the sacred writings. Consider the following:

Christ declared that man shall not live by bread alone, but ***“by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”*** (Matthew 4:4). If spiritual life is only to be found in the words from God, does it not stand to reason that **humanity is capable of understanding that message?**

When Jesus rebuked the Sadducees for their error concerning the resurrection of the human body, He charged that a part of their problem was that they were ignorant of the scriptures (Mt. 22:29). Does this not presuppose that had they been good students of the Old Testament they could have uniformly known that there was to be a resurrection of the body?

Though none of us was alive to witness the first-century miracles performed by the Lord Jesus, the history of those events was written down in order that we might believe those signs which documented the Master's claim of deity (see Jn. 20:30-31). Can we believe the biblical narratives regarding Christ's deeds, and confidently have a united understanding that He is the Son of God? If not, of what value is the New Testament?

Of the early church it is said: ***“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul”*** (Acts 4:32). How could such a statement possibly be made unless those early saints were capable of agreeing upon the apostolic instruction?

The citizens of the city of Berea were considered to be nobler than those of Thessalonica, because they received the word of God with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily to determine the accuracy of what they were being taught (see Acts 17:11). Does this affirmation not imply that these inquirers were able to draw harmonious conclusions about the word of God?

The Christians in Rome were commanded to be on the look-out for those who caused divisions and occasions of stumbling ***“contrary to the doctrine which ye learned”*** (Rom. 16:17). If we cannot understand the Bible alike, how could anyone ever be disciplined for walking contrary to sound doctrine? That would make no sense whatever.

In the New Testament epistles, the churches are constantly admonished to ***“speak the same thing,” to be free from divisions, and to “be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment”*** (1 Cor. 1:10; cf. Phil. 2:2). How can we possibly take this instruction seriously if we are incapable of understanding the Bible alike?

The apostle Paul plainly declared that by reading the message which he wrote, we would be able to perceive his understanding of the gospel of Christ (see Eph. 3:1-7). He thus subsequently charges: ***“Wherefore be ye not foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is”*** (Eph. 5:17).

The inspired scriptures are said to be profitable ***“for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work”*** (2 Tim. 3:16-17). If we do not have the ability to understand the scriptures, how can the holy writings profit us in the aforementioned categories?

Can we understand the Bible? Of course we can. Can we **understand it alike?** Why not?

Conclusion

If we can understand that $2 + 2 = 4$; if we can understand that 55 miles per hour means just that, then we can understand: ***“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”*** (Mk. 16:16). We can understand that there is ***“one body”*** (Eph. 4:4), and that that body is the church (Col. 1:18). We can further know that salvation is in that body (Eph. 5:23), and outside of that body no redemption is to be found (2 Tim. 2:10).

The problem with those who contend that men cannot agree upon the scripture's teaching is simply this: they are seeking a way to **justify error!**

Brethren, let's make it our goal to understand the Bible **alike**. Only in this way can we truly ***“keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”*** (Eph. 4:3).

Wayne Jackson
Christian Courier Archives

Those Who Serve

Scheduled Services

Sunday

Bible Study - 9:45 am
Worship - 10:30 am
Eve.Worship - 6:30 p.m

Wednesday

Bible Study - 7:30 p.m.

The Prism is a publication of the Sunshine Church of Christ. To learn more about the Church of Christ you may contact us at the telephone number or address on the front cover.

Deadline for each issue is 5 p.m. Friday. News items may be called to Steve Miller or Al Graff or e-mailed to:

bulletin@sunshine-church.org

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Sunday Morning

Bible Class Text
Welcome & Prayer
Song Director
Scripture Reading
Prayer
Lord's Supper - Wine
Bread
Assist
Assist
Assist
Assist
Message
Closing Prayer

August 8

Matthew 6
Don Coriell
Scott Gampp
Alan Graff
Zack Coriell
Bud Coriell
Jamie Riley
Homer Miller
John Oesch
Terry Royster
Kevin Stimpert
Steve Miller
Bud Coriell

August 15

Matthew 7
Jon Coriell
Shaun McCray
Greg Coriell
Matt Cram
Jason Coriell
Rick Brown
Hayes Wilcox
Mark Risner
Dewey Cordle
Greg Coriell
Steve Miller
Jamie Riley

Sunday Evening

Song Director
Opening Prayer
Lord's Supper
Closing Prayer

Wayne Gampp
Jeff Hayward
Aaron McCray
Josh Coriell

Jeff Hayward
Eric McLaughlin
Greg Coriell
Mark Gampp

Wednesday Evening

Song Director
Prayer
Bible Class Text

Eric McLaughlin
Rich Book
Job 38-41

Gabe Coriell
Terry Sullivan
Job 42:1-17

Advance listings for Those Who Serve are posted on our website.

Elders

Don Coriell	776-6346	dcoriell@sunshine-church.org
Jon Coriell	776-3248	jcoriell@sunshine-church.org
Wayne Gampp	820-3444	wgampp@sunshine-church.org
Tom Kelley	259-2258	tkelley@sunshine-church.org

Evangelists

Steve Miller	820-4379	smiller@sunshine-church.org
Pager	290-0156	
Jamie Riley	820-3348	jriley@sunshine-church.org
Pager	290-0158	

Building 820-3415
Building Fax 820-5450
Campus Ministry 355-3186

Office Hours: 8-12 M-F
sunshinecofc@peoplepc.com

Deacons & Areas of Ministry

Rich Book	820-3213	Education, Elbrooke Services, Library
Bud Coriell	776-3452	Building Remodeling
Mike Coriell	820-3415	Local Benevolence
Jason Coriell	820-4739	Treasurer, Office Supplies
Scott Gampp	820-3545	Worship, Special Events
Gary Glispie	776-4279	Church Directory, Program of Work
Alan Graff	776-7905	Bulletin, Advert., Front sign, Computers
Dick Havens	456-5009	Building Maint., Supplies
Taylor Hoskins	820-4645	Worship, Insurance, Budget
Shaun McCray	776-7738	Treasurer, Office Supplies
Homer Miller	776-7550	Funerals, Hosp. Visit., Attendance
Eugene Risner	820-2256	Fire, Health, Seniors, Joy of Giving
Willis Shumway	820-2833	Bldg. Use & Security, Baptistry
Terry Sullivan	776-7056	Youth Ministry

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