

God Has Spoken  
Tract Series

YOU CAN  
UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE

*Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, ... And he read therein ... from the morning until midday, ... So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading ... And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them (Nehemiah 8:1-12).*

All those who could **understand** (3) listened with **understanding** (2) as the preacher caused them to **understand** (8), and the result was that they **understood** (12). Many say that “It is impossible that we could all understand the Bible alike.” Others profess that one understands the Bible only “because the Holy Spirit acts on him” in some way to unable understanding.

The 119<sup>th</sup> Psalm addresses this question several times. Verses 99-100 declare that man understands because he reads the Bible and keeps its established truths: ***I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.*** Further assurance that we get understanding through reading the Bible is in verse 104: ***Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way,*** and verse 130: ***The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.*** If the Bible is believable at all, it is simply incorrect to affirm that we cannot understand it.

*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds*  
(Hebrews 1:1-2).

Part of the purpose of the book of Proverbs is *to understand* (1:6). Among the many statements of wisdom in the book is the promise from God that the reader who **wants to understand**, and **works at understanding**, **shall understand** (2:1-9). Proverbs 4:1-7 repeat that understanding has to be wanted and attended to, but promises that with this approach **understanding is possible**.

*And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* Jesus (Matthew 13:14) and Paul (Acts 28:26-27) both quoted Isaiah 6:9-10 that many will not believe the gospel because they will not try to understand it. Either the Bible is a lie, or it is understandable, for it declares again in the words of Isaiah (29:24), *They also that erred in spirit shall **come to understanding**, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.* The angel Gabriel told Daniel to **understand** the vision of weeks (Daniel 9:23).

In the New Testament also we are assured again and again that we can understand the word of God – and are admonished that we must. Jesus, who certainly ought to know whether God made His word understandable to the mind of man, told men to *hear and **understand*** (Matthew 15:10). He asked commonly educated men, ***how is it that ye don't understand*** (Matthew 16:11). The Son of God spoke to all who approach the Bible, *whoever reads let him **understand*** (Matthew 24:15), and plainly explained to His accusers that they didn't understand because they were listening to Satan rather than to God (John 8:41-44).

**The disciples understood** the words of Jesus when He spoke about Elijah coming first (Matthew 17:13), but they didn't understand the significance of His “triumphal entry” into Jerusalem until **after the passage of some time** (John 12:16). As with information or communication in any human endeavor, it is easy to draw a false conclusion, and behave according to a wrong principle, if we aren't patient enough to get all the pertinent data firmly in mind first.

When Philip approached the Ethiopian, the question that led to their study implied the possibility of understanding even the difficult book of Isaiah: ***Understandest thou what thou readest?*** (Acts 8:30). The Ethiopian's answer implied likewise the same possibility, and showed that

he agreed with the Spirit-led Philip on the matter: *How can I, except **some man should guide me**?* (verse 31).

Consider the confidence of the apostle Paul. He wrote in Romans 1:20 that we can understand **if we observe correctly & reason correctly**: *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being **understood** by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.* To the church in Ephesus he wrote, ***when ye read, ye may understand** my knowledge in the mystery of Christ* (Ephesians 3:3-4). Later in the same epistle he wrote of those outside of Christ that **they don't understand because** they are ignorant – and they are ignorant because **they are blind of heart** (4:18). That is, their hearts were not open to seeing God. Their affections and interests were elsewhere; they didn't really want to hear, respect, honor and obey God's word.

The apostle Peter added that common people – unaided by anything more than a cursory education and common sense – can understand the Bible (II Peter 2:12). Peter himself acknowledged that Paul wrote *some things hard to be understood*, but those things are “hard,” not impossible. Understanding God's word begins with the **will to know** the word of God, and results from **listening** to it.

To say that man cannot understand the Bible, that we cannot understand it without some divine intervention, or that we cannot “understand it alike” is to argue with the Bible itself.

It is strange indeed for a man to write that one cannot understand the written word of God – or cannot understand it without miraculous intervention. For what purpose would God create that writer with the ability to write words that can be understood, but would Himself write so as not to be understood? To admit that one can understand human speech, and yet to suggest that he cannot understand the word of God, is to hold that God is *incapable* of communicating so as to be understood – or is *unwilling* to do so. What kind of God is that?

Verse 12 concludes Nehemiah's chapter 8 record of that day in Jerusalem: *And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because **they had understood the words** that were declared unto them.* They had a good life, and did good works with great joy, because they had understood the Bible. If you

understand it when you read it, glorify God – If you don't, apply the steps we have seen here:

**be sure you want to  
read more of it  
practice what you do understand  
ask for help  
give it some more time and thought**

God loves you. He wants to save you from the consequences of sin. He has given you a book so you can understand Him and live so as to be blessed by Him. Successful people work diligently to achieve success. Don't be your own obstacle to achieving the goal of your existence: to be blessed by God in eternity. When you need help in understanding, we are ready to be your help. We will be praying for you.

### The Way to be Saved

1. **Believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:30-31; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:37; 17:3);
2. **Repent** from sin (Luke 13:3; 24:47; Acts 2:38);
3. **Confess** that belief in Jesus as the Christ (Matthew 10:32; Acts 8:36;38; Romans 10:9-10; I Timothy 6:12).
4. **Be baptized** in the name of Jesus for forgiveness of your sins (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 4:7, 12; Romans 6:3-7; Galatians 3:27).

### And to Stay Saved

5. **Walk in the light** of His word all the days of your life (I John 1:7; Psalm 119:105; II Peter 3:11-12).



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