

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.



THE LENEXA EDIFIER



John 8:32

"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"

MAY 13, 2018

ARE WE HEARERS OR DOERS OF THE WORD?

Jim Stauffer

"But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves."

(Jas 1:22) James is speaking to those who have been brought forth by the word of truth when he tells us to be doers of the word and not just hearers. These are the same people who have, *been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that it, thought the living and enduring word of God.* **(1 Pet. 1:23)**

We, then who attended the Gospel Meeting this past week at the Lenexa church of Christ must now decide if we will retain what bro. Berkley taught us and allow it to become a permanent part of our conduct as children of God. Our new birth having been of *the living and enduring word of God*, behooves us to be followers of Jesus, the Son of God, who authorized that very word. There are many very specific instructions in Scripture concerning following the Lord. Peter tells us we have been called for the very purpose of following in the steps of Jesus **(1 Pet. 2:21)**. If then we are to follow Him, we must of necessity hear what He has to say and then do it.

The first decision needing to be made has been accomplished. We have decided to follow Jesus. We then must learn all that is involved in that. Some of the things we learned this week were:

How to get started - Many have already taken this step but getting started involves our submission to His will. We must listen to the message of the gospel and then act on the commands to repent, confess His name and be baptized for the remission of our sins.

Following Jesus to His church - Jesus promised to build His church **(Mat. 16:18)** and when that occurred in Acts chapter 2, we learn those who were baptized for the remission of their sins were also described as both saved and added to the church.

Following Jesus with our family - As parents we are to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This means bringing them

along with us as we follow Jesus. This avoids the problem Jesus spoke of in **Mat. 10:34** when He said He came to bring a sword, not peace and that a man's enemies would be those of his own household. This occurs when we fail to teach our own families to follow Jesus as we have chosen to do.

Taking others with us - The early disciples made a point of telling the good news of the Savior of men to those closest to them. Friends and family. Andrew brought his brother Peter **(John 1:41)**. The persecuted Christians went everywhere to escape the persecution, but taught others the good news while on the way **(Acts 8:4)**.

Following Jesus to heaven - The reason we make the necessary sacrifices to follow Jesus is to spend eternity in heaven with him when this life is over **(Joh. 5:28,29)**.

Doers of the word will follow Jesus as we learned this week. Hearers only have deluded themselves and will be disappointed when the time for our reward comes.

Can The Bible Be Understood?

By Kyle Pope

In his second epistle to the church in Corinth, Paul wrote: *"For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end (as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus"* **(2 Cor. 1:13-14, NKJV)**. Paul claims that what he was writing to them was nothing other than what they could *"read"* and *"understand."* He concluded the verse with an expression of confidence that indeed they will understand *"even to the end"*—that is, he hoped they would become complete in their understanding—*"I hope you will understand fully"* **(RSV)**.

Throughout the ages there have been those who have falsely taught that the Scriptures cannot be understood by the average person. Some have argued that only if the Bible is interpreted by a priest or religious organization can it be properly understood. Others have claimed that Scripture can only be understood if the Holy Spirit directly acts upon a person (separate from the revealed words He has already inspired) to empower a person to be able to understand. The Gnostics imagined that their secret knowledge of some higher truths enabled them to understand what others could not. Each of these views paint a picture of the biblical text that leads souls to imagine that it is a confusing and hidden puzzle that cannot be “read” and “understood” as we would any other type of written material. Sadly, this results in people leaning exclusively on what other people tell them, following what they feel strongly within their hearts (imagining that it is the Holy Spirit leading them), or refusing to read the Bible at all. The Bible warns us about each of these responses to the word of God. When the religious leaders tried to tell the apostles not to teach what Jesus had commanded them, they responded boldly, *“We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29)*. Paul taught that Christians must, *“Test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thess. 5:21)*. John instructed Christians, *“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1)*. We cannot test doctrines that are taught if we do not have the ability to understand God’s word. We cannot distinguish between the commands of God and the commands of men if we cannot understand what God has revealed.

The Lord warned, through Ezekiel, *“Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing!’ (Ezek. 13:3)*. Paul taught that the way we are led by the Holy Spirit is by focusing our minds on what the Spirit has revealed. He told the Romans, *“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:5)*. He told the Ephesians to take up *“the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17)*. We can only know the difference between the inclinations of our “own spirit” and the revelation of God by setting our minds on the things which the Holy Spirit has revealed in Scripture. It is the Spirit’s *“two-edged sword”* that acts as a *“discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12)*. If we do not read the Bible we are not allowing the Spirit to work through the word to shape our hearts and lead our actions.

In Paul’s words in **2 Corinthians 1:13** we should note some things that directly contradict these false views of Scripture. Paul says he wrote to them things they could...

“Read”—anaginōskō (ἀναγινώσκω)—“To gather exact knowledge of, recognize, discern; especially to read”

(Harold K. Moulton, *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978, 21). Paul tells the Corinthians that by reading his inspired words they can gather the knowledge they need of things pertaining to life in Christ.

“Understand”—epiginōskō (ἐπιγινώσκω)—“Properly to make a thing a subject of observation; hence, to arrive at knowledge from preliminaries; to attain to a knowledge of; to ascertain; to perceive; to discern, detect” (ibid., 155). These words are drawn from the same word, only the prefix differs. By reading his inspired word, Paul says the Corinthians may fully know the things they need to know about life in Christ.

This is seen further in his next words—*“(as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus” (2 Cor. 1:14)*. Paul claims that they had only understood *“in part.”* This is interesting in light of his words in his first epistle. He had claimed of them that they had been, *“enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge” (1 Cor. 1:5)*. What does this indicate about what is necessary to understand Scripture

Here is what is clear:

1. The Corinthians had spiritual gifts (**1 Cor. 12-14**). So, the Holy Spirit had worked within them. Yet...
2. They did not yet fully understand all aspects of the truth—they only understood *“in part” (2 Cor. 1:14)*.
3. What was written to them could be understood if they truly applied themselves to it *“to the end” (2 Cor. 1:13)*.

If Scripture can only be understood if interpreted by the proper religious authority why would Paul claim they could come to understand it? If Scripture can only be understood if the Holy Spirit grants the ability to understand it, why didn’t the Corinthians understand it—the Spirit had done His part (**1 Cor. 1:5**)?

God has given the Scriptures to mankind in a form that can be accepted or rejected and fully understood if, rightly divided (**2 Tim. 2:15**). When men do not understand (or accept) the truth, it is not because they don’t have the ability to do so, but rather because something about the condition of their heart is not right. We see this in the Parable of the Sower. The same seed was sown, but what determined whether or not it grew was not whether it was interpreted by a religious leader or organization—it was not because the Holy Spirit didn’t empower it—it was because of the condition of the soil (**Matt. 13:1-9; 18-23**). If men and women will put out of their hearts and minds preconceptions and personal desires and openly and sincerely look to God’s word, it can be understood as we would any other written document. All who sincerely wish to understand

Scripture can understand it. Jesus said, *"If anyone wants to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority"* (John 7:17).

Taken from focusmagazine.org

THE GREAT COMMISSION

"And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16). If Jesus is real, if Jesus is God's son, if Jesus' words are true, then what we commonly call the Great Commission is truly the *Great Commission*. If Jesus is the Savior of the world (and He is), then we need to always seek His will, follow His commands, and serve Him faithfully. When He tells us to go, then we need to go. When He says go and take the gospel, that is what we must do. Not doing so says that we really don't believe in Jesus. Not doing so means we really don't believe that men and women are lost. Not doing so means we don't value our souls or the souls of others. On the other hand, we can believe, accept, obey, and go into all the world. Do you believe that?

The gospel calls all to believe in Jesus. After His resurrection, some did not believe the report of the women who had gone to the empty tomb (Mk. 16:14). He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart of even some of the eleven apostles. These men were to be witnesses to the Lord's resurrection. But they had trouble believing. Mary told them about Jesus being alive, but they refused to believe (Mark 16:11). The power behind the Great Commission is the resurrection of Christ. Is Jesus alive now? Does He save people now? And do we believe?

The apostles were to go into all the world. These men, generally speaking, were not well-educated. They were not wealthy. But what did they do? Some thirty or thirty-five years after the giving of the Great Commission, the Apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians and said that the gospel had been preached to every creature under heaven (Colossians 1:23). They took the gospel to the known world then. They did so without modern communication and without modern transportation. Mostly, they won the world for Christ *one by one*. It is not so much how did they do this, but why were they able to take the good news everywhere? The answer is that they really did believe in Jesus Christ; they believed He was real.

The Great Commission calls for a response. Jesus said all who come to Him must believe and be baptized. If we can understand $2 + 2 = 4$, then we can understand Jesus. Belief yes. Baptism yes. Belief only? No. Baptism only? No. But why should we today believe that message? Jesus told His apostles and all who would listen to their preaching that the power of the Holy Spirit

of God would confirm the truth of their message. Signs from heaven would follow those who believe. The Great Commission was confirmed. It was preached. It was believed and obeyed by many.

Well, we are not apostles, someone says. That is true. But there is still the need to preach the saving message of salvation to lost people everywhere. Jesus said He would be with them and with us unto the end of the ages. He is with us today as we go forth. Again, the question is: Do we really believe in Jesus? Do we believe that sinful people are lost? Do we believe the worth of each individual? Do we believe in the gospel's power to save? If we say yes, then what? Then it is time to get up and go somewhere and preach the gospel. What greater call can there be? And remember that this is what Mark has been trying to tell us all along. *"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God"* (Mark 1:1).

Randy Harshbarger

The Purposes of the Prophecy

Imagine you are at work and your supervisor came to you and said, "I'm giving you seven hours!" and nothing else and then turned and walked away, what would you think? If you're like most folks, you wouldn't know what to think! Why? Because he didn't tell you what the seven hours were to accomplish! If, on the other hand, he gave you six fairly clear objectives to be accomplished within the time limit your stress level would go down considerably, wouldn't it?

Well, the God of Heaven doesn't do anything without a very good reason and in this case it's no different. When the angel Gabriel relayed the prophecy to Daniel he also gave six very specific purposes to be fulfilled by the prophecy. These purposes were in order:

1. To finish the transgression
2. To make an end of sin
3. To make atonement for iniquity
4. To bring in everlasting righteousness
5. To seal up vision and prophecy
6. To anoint the most holy place. These six purposes were to be completed within the Seventy Weeks. These MUST OCCUR before the end of the seventieth week if God is to be believed. There are other things mentioned in the wording of the prophecy that are not the purposes for which the prophecy was given and they may or may not occur within the time frame of the Seventy Weeks and not affect the verity of God in the least.

Over the course of the next several weeks we will look at each of the purposes of the prophecy individually and see if scripture tells us they have been fulfilled. Several of them we ought to be able to see through rather quickly. Others may prove more difficult. We must do as the Navy Seal does, "Embrace the difficulty." (Not a direct quote.)

Cleveland Reddinger

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

Elders Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

Deacons:

Bill Miller

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NEWS AND NOTES:

SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

JAN PATRICK, STEPHEN KIMKER,
STEVE WIMP AND THE MOTHER
OF ALMA BAUMGARTNER

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS:
CHRISTIAN PARENTING PART 2 -
RON PECK TEACHER

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS:
ANGELS AND DEMONS
JIM STAUFFER TEACHER

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON:
LESSONS FROM GOD'S
COMMANDS



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10