

Attitudes to Studying the Bible

Introduction

1. Bible study is important, not only for our spiritual growth, but also as we seek to confront false doctrine (Heb.5:12-14; cp. Eph 1:18-19; Col 1:9-10).
 - a. In NT times God's people had to face the problem of false doctrine and its destructive effects upon church unity – Judaizers and Greek philosophers.
 - b. Today, we are also beset by different religious organizations with their conflicting doctrines and practices causing confusion and discouragement to many.
2. The answer to this religious confusion is to study God's word with the right attitude and purpose (cp. Proverbs 23:7).
 - a. Many take the view that as long as we attend church and believe in Jesus, then that's all that matters; not the rights or wrongs of our beliefs and practices.
 - b. This is clearly not the attitude of a seriously minded Christian when we consider the importance God attaches to religious truth (Matthew 7:21-23).
 - c. Some of the reasons for this denominational attitude and the aversion many have to a serious study of the Bible are the same reasons that should motivate us towards the study of God's word:

I. The Complete and Total Revelation of God's Will

- A. There are many people with a claim to Christianity that do not consider the Bible as the complete and total revelation from God; a belief that can obstruct any serious discussion or study of what it teaches.
 1. The Catholic Church views the Pope as Christ's spokesman and that his teachings are a continuing revelation of God's will. They also view the traditions of the church on a par with scriptural authority. The JW's and Mormons listen to their self-proclaimed prophets; there are conferences where doctrines are formulated.
 2. These religious organizations often quote from the Bible and refer to Christ and His apostles, but the scriptures are not viewed as the sole authority on questions of religion and morality (cp. Col. 2:20-23; Mk. 7:6-8).
- B. Such an approach cannot lead to a serious study of God's word as it denies the very basic principle upon which Bible study is to be conducted; that it is final in its authority (cp. Colossians 2:9-10).
 1. A faithful church today recognizes Christ as its head and accepts His word as the final authority in all religious matters, as required of local congregations in NT times (cp. Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 3:17; 1 Thess. 4:1-2 cf. Acts 2:38).
 2. Today, we have in the Bible the complete and total will of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Jude 3; 2 Pet. 1:3).
 3. We must study God's word for the purpose of seeking God's mind and judgment and not whether it tallies with modern thought and practices (1 Cor. 2:9-14).

II. God's Will Can Be Understood

- A. Any serious study of God's word must proceed on the basis that we can understand the will of God and that we can all come to an equal understanding of it.
 1. Many sincere religious people belong to denominations in which their leaders consider them incapable of understanding God's word; claiming themselves to be the repositories of truth – Pope, Watchtower Society, Conferences, etc.
 2. Often you will hear people say, "You understand the Bible your way and I understand it my way", as a way of avoiding a proper and meaningful study of God's word.
- B. Our approach to Bible study must be on the basis that, not only that we can know what it teaches, but that it is the very purpose of God's revelation (cp. Eph. 3:4).
 1. There are many that believe that it is impossible for ordinary men and women to read and understand the Bible, but this is the assurance Paul gave to those that understood his insight into God's revelation.
 2. We should not confuse the fact that we "can all" understand with the fact that we "will not all" understand what the scriptures are teaching (cf. Mt. 13:14-15; Heb. 5:11; 2 Peter 3:16 cp. 1 Peter 4:11).
 3. If we cannot all understand the Bible then we cannot all be sure of what it teaches, which runs contrary to the will of God (Jno. 8:31-34; Rom. 1:16-17; Eph. 5:11; 1 Tim. 2:4; 1 John 5:13).

Conclusion

With the constant threat from false teaching it is important that God's people study the Bible viewing it as final in its authority and able to be understood through diligent study and prayer (Jas. 1:5-8 cf. Ps. 32:8-10).