

## *Can You Understand the Bible?*

David Halbrook

The idea that we cannot all understand the Bible is wrong and dangerous. Why would God give us the Bible if we cannot understand it? Could Adam and Eve understand what God expected them to eat and not eat (Genesis 2:16-17)? Could Moses understand what God expected him to do to part the Red Sea (Exodus 14:16)? Paul said "...when you read, you may understand" (Ephesians 3:4; 5:17).

God has always spoken in a way that can be understood by people who: WANT to understand (Matthew 13:15), WORK to understand (2 Timothy 2:15), are WILLING to do what they understand (James 1:25), and PERSIST in learning and doing *these things* (2 Peter 1:8).

Not everyone believes you can understand the Bible. An "Archbishop" said "Is the Bible a book intelligible to all? Far from it..." ([www.cathcorn.org/foof/8.html](http://www.cathcorn.org/foof/8.html)) Did this man expect us to be able to understand what *he wrote*? Then, why does he think we cannot understand what God wrote?

Yes, all CAN understand, but all do not understand. Why is that? We'll discuss that next week. You can read that article now, or comment on this article, at our website.

Editor's Note: Are you surprised to read that a Catholic Archbishop does not believe all people can understand the Bible? Where did he get this idea from? Use this week's article in *Arkansas Weekly* to help others know that they can understand the Bible. Future articles will further investigate this subject.

### Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

Pray for: Janice White, The Ledgerwoods, Samuel Southall, and others with ongoing trials, our brethren who are travelling, and new Christians among us.

Openings remain on two lists on the back bulletin board. Are you doing your share of our work together? No one will have to do it all if we all do some.

*We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM*

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# The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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## *The Church of the Next Generation*

Donald Townsley

It is a well-known fact that a generation of people often inherit the good deeds and mistakes of a previous generation. This being true, each generation needs to be keenly aware of its responsibility. This is also true in the church. What the church of tomorrow will be and accomplish depends, to a great degree, upon what we do and teach in this generation. We all need to realize that just because we are sound in the faith is no guarantee that our children will be! If we fail to properly teach in our generation, our children may forsake the Lord!

My generation in the church inherited the failures of the generation before to properly teach concerning the mission of the church and the church working through human organizations. As a result of this failure to teach, a great percentage of the church has gone into digression. For forty years now many of us have fought the tide of digression on the one hand, and on the other we have had to work hard to convert people to Christ that the church might continue to grow and reach the world with the pure gospel. The Lord has been with us and our number has increased many-fold.

What does the future hold for churches of Christ that are striving to preach the gospel without addition or subtraction -- churches that are striving to follow the New Testament pattern in all things? That future depends upon the kind of teaching that we are now giving our children. If we take too much for granted and fail to teach and warn, the churches we have worked so hard to build may be lost to digression in the next generation!

Israel, in the days of Joshua, is a good example of this kind of failure. (Read Judges 2:7-13). After the death of Joshua and the elders who outlived him "there arose another generation who knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel." (Judges 2:10) We wonder how this could be! The answer is that the succeeding generation had failed to teach. The next logical question is, "Who was responsible for teaching them?" The Bible reveals that the priests bore part of the

responsibility; they were to read the Law to the people every seven years (Deut. 31:9-13). This would mean that a boy of seven would hear the Law again at age 14, 21, 28, 35, etc. It is hard to conceive of these people being ignorant of God's law if this had been done. The elders of the people should have demanded that the Law be read and observed as God commanded (Num. 11:16-17). The parents were to teach their children at home (Deut. 4:9; 6:7-12). A failure on the part of parents would produce ignorance. The people themselves should have desired that the law of God be read. All these had failed in their responsibilities.

As a result, Israel was ignorant of God's ways (Judges 2: 10) and had gone after the gods of those round about them (Judges 2:16-17). They did that which was right in their own eyes (Judges 17:6; 21:25). They forsook the God who had saved them (Judges 2:13), and were inappreciative of His mercy. They did that which was evil in God's sight and cause His wrath to be upon them (Judges 2:11-14).

Who has the responsibility, under Christ's authority, to teach in our generation? Preachers and teachers of the word of God have responsibility. They are to be loyal to God, not men-pleasers (Acts 20:26-27; Gal. 1:10). They have a responsibility to warn about departures from the faith (I Tim. 4:1-6). They are to preach the word "in season" and "out of season" (II Tim. 4:2). Elders of the church are watchmen; they are to teach and to warn (Acts 20: 28-31). Woe to the shepherds in Israel who fail in their duty to teach and to warn! Parents must teach their children the word of God and warn them about departures from the faith (Eph. 6:1-4). Christians as a whole should demand that the truth be taught. They should shun evil and all that might bring apostasy.

Brethren, if we fail to properly teach and warn, the next generation will have to drink from the same bitter cup of sorrow that we have in our generation! My hope and prayer is that the little boys and girls who are all around me when the saints assemble to worship will never have to know the sorrow and see the bitterness that I have seen and known in spiritual Israel in my generation. I have seen churches divide, families split apart, friendships broken, and sinners confused because of an untaught generation.

What will the church be in the next generation? A lot of what it will be, brethren, is in our hands today! If preachers, teachers, elders, and parents will fulfill their responsibilities today the church will be sound tomorrow.

## *Toward More Effective Teaching (1)*

*Wayne Galloway*

Since the great commission our primary objective, as disciples of Christ, has been to preach the gospel. Such questions as, "How can I be more effective in teaching the gospel?" should be of special interest to all of us. The purpose of this article is to call attention to some things that will prove helpful in teaching the lost.

### **Be Converted Yourself**

An individual who is not truly converted himself is going to have difficulty in being motivated to teach others. As he attempts to do so he will not be very effective. A teacher of the gospel must live a life that exemplifies Christianity morally and spiritually.

Paul condemned the Gentiles for their sins in Romans 1. In chapter 2 he condemned the Jews, who claimed to be teachers of the law, for practicing things they condemned in the Gentiles. Paul said the name of God was blasphemed because of them. The "Christian" who teaches one thing and practices another causes the name of God to be blasphemed.

The teacher of the gospel must be spiritually minded. True spirituality is not characteristic of the "Oozing Christian." An "Oozing Christian" is one who wears his religion on his sleeve. True spirituality is not a sort of syrupy attitude which goes around saying "Praise the Lord" all the time.

The faith of the spiritually minded man is more than an "Environmental Faith." It is deeper than what can be produced by one's surroundings. Second generation Christians are specially vulnerable to this kind of faith. Their environment has produced within them a semblance of Christianity. But it consists in outward formality only and is not genuine.

The spiritually minded man has a genuine desire to please God from the heart. He is totally committed to Christ. He is willing to sacrifice, to spend and be spent in God's service. He is not like the young doctor who volunteered to go overseas to serve God, but prayed not to go to Africa. His spirituality is meaningful to him. If your spirituality is not meaningful to you how do you ever expect to make it meaningful to someone else? Perhaps you need to sit down and write out the reasons why you are a Christian. Are you a Christian because you appreciate the compassion that God has had on you? If so, develop this same appreciation in others and see them obey the gospel.

The man who is truly converted will have a genuine interest in those who are lost. He will not be motivated by a desire for the congregation to grow so that he can say "Look what I have done." Whatever we may do is only with God's help and he is the one who should receive the glory. We must be motivated by a love for the lost. If our motives are not right the man who is lost will sense it and close us and the gospel out. Young people convert they want to marry because they love them and take a personal interest in their spiritual lives.

*(Searching the Scriptures, June 1984)*