

Can We Understand the Bible Alike?

David Halbrook

When people understand the Bible, they understand it alike. All who understand Genesis 1:1 agree that it teaches that God is the Creator. If I say “I interpret that verse to mean that an angel created all things,” then my interpretation is wrong—I have not understood that verse. There is only one way to *understand* that verse, and if we understand it at all, then we have the same understanding.

“Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (Ephesians 5:17). Is God’s will for you different than it is for me on the subject of Jesus’ deity, faith, baptism, true worship, or the organization of the family? Is God pleased if we just “agree to disagree” on these subjects and continue teaching and practicing different things?

Satan is fooling people into believing that we cannot understand the Bible alike. This is one reason why there are so many different kinds of churches. If we all understand the Bible, would we have different teachings and practices? No, the same teachings *in every church* would unite us (1 Cor. 4:17). If we understand the Bible and obey it, unity will be the result. That is our goal—is it yours? Write and tell us!

Editor’s Note: Find and make the most of our article in *Arkansas Weekly*. This article concludes a short series of articles emphasizing the importance of understanding the Bible. Many people are unnecessarily intimidated by the Bible. Use these articles to build confidence in yourself and others that God is wise enough to speak so that we His creation can understand His word!

Simple opportunities to teach the lost and assist each other.

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

There are two lists on the back bulletin board of work needing workers. Are you doing your share of our work together?

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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Doctrines of Demons?

John R. Gibson

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and *doctrines of demons*, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, *forbidding to marry*, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth” (1 Timothy 4:1-3; emphasis added, JRG).

Since “forbidding to marry” is listed among the doctrines of demons, should Christians support the rights of homosexuals to marry? Are we under the influence of deceiving spirits when we oppose such unions?

I believe the answer to both questions is an unequivocal NO! And the reason is very simple—while marriage is honorable and the bed undefiled (Hebrews 13:4), God ruled out homosexual marriages when He defined marriage as requiring a male and a female. When Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees on the subject of divorce, He took His interrogators back to the creation account of Genesis 1 and 2 and spoke of God making them “male and female” (Matthew 19:3-6). Because our English language is in a constant state of change, the union of two homosexuals may soon come to be commonly referred to as a marriage, but it will never be the marriage God describes as honorable and undefiled in Hebrews 13:4. And those who oppose such unions are not guilty of upholding the doctrines of demons, but are simply defending the moral teachings of Scripture (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10).

While this point regarding homosexual marriages needs to be made in our troubled time, it is not the main point of this article. Not long ago I received an outline of a sermon that indicted those who opposed the rights of the divorced to remarry as following the “doctrines of devils.” Did this preacher have a valid point? Is it wrong to tell the divorced that they are not to remarry?

I certainly do not wish to be guilty of demonic teachings, but I believe our response to questions regarding the remarriage of divorced persons should be along the same lines as our response to questions about homosexual marriages. Homosexual marriages are wrong because they do not fit God's definition of an acceptable, honorable, and undefiled marriage and is the same not true of some heterosexual marriages? We must understand that God has done more than define marriage as involving a male and a female—He has also restricted which males and females may be joined in marriage. If all who warn against certain marriages are involved in “doctrines of demons,” there are some serious questions that deserve careful consideration.

Was Moses guilty of demonic teaching when he prohibited men from marrying their sisters, aunts, granddaughters, etc. (Leviticus 18)? Was he wrong to forbid them to marry the Canaanites in Deuteronomy 7:1-5? Of course he was not, for the words of Moses were the words of the very Lord who created mankind as male and female and who had the right to establish the terms for marriage.

Was John the Baptist wrong when he rebuked Herod for being married to his brother's wife (Mark 6:18)? What of Paul when he commanded the departed wife to remain unmarried or be reconciled with the husband she had left (1 Corinthians 7:10, 11)?

Moses, John, and Paul all taught that there were circumstances under which it was wrong for men and women to marry, and only the vilest of blasphemers would accuse them of upholding the “doctrines of demons.” As stated earlier, I do not ever want to be associated with demonic teachings and do not believe I am, for the simple fact is that when I preach the truth on marriage and divorce, I do not forbid anyone to marry—God does! Unless we can believe that God would contradict His own solemn warnings against immorality and encourage people to commit adultery (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10), then in the following passages He is telling certain ones that they are “forbidden” to marry.

“But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery” (Matthew 5:32).

“So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.’ They said to Him, ‘Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?’ He said to them, ‘Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for

sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery” (Matthew 19:6-9).

“Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery” (Luke 16:18).

When it comes to marriage, while we are not to take away privileges God has granted (1 Timothy 4:1-3), we are also obligated to recognize the limitations He has placed on marriage (Matthew 19:9; et al). www.pepperroadchurch.org/resources/articles

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Some Scriptures Discussed: Gen. 11:1-9

Robertson Whiteside (Doctrinal Discourses, p301-302)

When I was young I heard it said that the people in the land of Shinar after the flood decided to build a tower so high that they could climb up it into heaven. I had an idea that that foolish notion was dead; but recently I read an article that advocated the notion that these people were trying to go to heaven on their own plan. Well, will curious notions never cease? Their proposed plan is plainly stated in Genesis 11:4. They said, “Come let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven.” Now if they wanted to climb up that tower into heaven, why would they want to build a city to leave behind? Their proposed plan is plainly stated. Read this verse: “And they said, Come let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make a name; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth.” It was their plan for unity. They wanted a centralized rallying point. God had commanded, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth;” but they did not want to “be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.” But here is what the Lord said of their efforts: “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is what they begin to do: and nothing will be withholden from them, which they purpose to do. Come let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.” And because their plan ran contrary to God's plan, he confounded their language so they could not understand one another's speech. “So, Jehovah scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth.” All man-made schemes for unity fail. If people would study what to say instead of just studying something to say, it would help.