

Keys to Spiritual Light

**Another
STUDY IN BIBLICAL ACCURACY
by
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Keys to
Spiritual
Light

Author
STUDY IN BIBLICAL ACCURACY
Lectures

The scriptures used throughout this study are quoted from the King James Version unless otherwise noted. Any explanatory insertions by the author within the scripture verse are enclosed in brackets [].

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his study is prepared to enable us in the development of our spiritual life to study the Word of God and to make it a living reality in everyday life. In order to do this, we may have to unlearn some things that we accepted as "gospel" from man, but for which we find no backing of truth in God's Word. In many instances it is an alarming commentary on our spiritual life when we honestly face up to the little that we actually know about the Bible after attending Sunday school and church since early childhood. Have we checked our beliefs against the Word of God, or have we accepted man's word and tradition?

In material things most of us are very cautious of what we buy and accept, yet concerning our spiritual life, we are prone to believe (or at least tolerate) anything, usually without question. That does not mean that we question the Word of God. Never! But we certainly have every right—and it is our responsibility—to check what we are taught and believe in the light of God's Word.

The information in this booklet is based upon the inherent teaching in God's Word itself. The Bible need not be a closed book to us unless we so choose. Read the Bible with the attitude that it is not difficult and with the desire to know truth.

Our varying backgrounds of learning make it necessary to establish the attitudes we need to have toward the Bible, upon which the following helps are based. There are certain foundational scriptures that we must rightly divide and understand if our spiritual life is to be properly developed. The first one is recorded in II Timothy 3:16 and 17.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God ["God breathed"; the Greek word is *theopneustos*, translated by the five words: "given by inspiration of God"], *and is profitable for doctrine* [how to believe rightly], *for reproof* [when not believing rightly], *for correction* [how to get back to right believing], *for instruction in righteousness* [teaching]:

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The Bible as the Word of God is of necessity also the will of God, for we cannot separate God's will from His Word any more than we can separate a man's will from his word. God plainly says that all scripture was God breathed. Our attitude toward the Word indicates our spiritual status.

Our second attitude toward God's Word is stated in II Peter 1:20 and 21.

Knowing this first [not last, or any other place, but first], *that no prophecy* [both forthtelling and

foretelling] of the scripture is of any private [the Greek word is *idios*, translated "one's own" or "his own"; only translated "private" here] interpretation.

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

If we hold this second attitude toward God's Word, namely, that no scripture is of any private [one's own] interpretation; then the third foundational truth to hold is:

II Timothy 2:15:

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

You ask, "How can we know if we rightly divide the Word?" The Word is accurate—God says what He means and means what He says. He has a purpose for everything He says and even the way in which He says it. What appears to be an inaccuracy is usually due to our misunderstanding of what we are reading. Does the Bible say that Eve ate an apple? Does the Bible say that Jonah was swallowed by a whale? (Matthew 12:40 says, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly. . . .") This cross-references Jonah 1:17, which says a "great fish.") Without going back to the originals we can see this inaccuracy. These may seem of little importance, and it is true they have nothing to do

with our basis for Christian living, yet we have read other passages just as carelessly, causing dissension and even new denominations. The Word of God is the will of God. Any person can know God's will if he will only study His Word and believe it.

There have been many translations of the Bible, and we need to check and compare them in study. Nothing that man does is perfect—so all translations have errors. The Authorized Version, commonly known as the King James Version, is perhaps more familiar to most Christians than any other. Yet, it too is a translation of the Word of God. Chapters, verses, punctuation, center references, marginal notes, chapter headings, etc., have all been added by man. Words in italics have been added by the translators. The originals were without punctuation, divisions, etc. If the Word is inspired, then the words must of necessity be inspired of God also. Since the markings were added by man and were not God breathed, we must refrain from giving them the same importance as the words. The additions by man are good for reference but never for interpretation. We must of necessity always have the true meaning of the Word before we can have or make the proper application.

The Bible has many writers but only one author—God. Man did the speaking in his own vocabulary, but *what* he spoke was *what* God wanted spoken.

Since the Scripture is of "no private interpretation" it must interpret itself. This is done basically in one of three ways:

1. It interprets itself in the verse where it is used.
or
2. In the context.
or
3. It has been used before.

The whole Bible is not addressed to us.

Romans 15:4:

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

I Corinthians 10:32 gives us an important key. There are three groups of people in the Bible—Judeans, Gentiles, and the Church of God. We who are Christians belong to the Church of God. *All* of the Bible is for our learning—the specific things for us are addressed to us and must be understood by us. So it is most important that we see to whom the passage is addressed. What was said to the Judeans was not said to the Church of God, etc. Much of our confusion is caused by trying to apply to ourselves what was written to someone else. Read the Book of Romans (for example) in light of this, and it will unfold like a new book because the entire

book is not addressed to the same group.

The key to power in our day-by-day living is the renewed mind.

Romans 12:2:

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

How do we renew our minds? By studying the Bible. Salvation (new birth, conversion) is God's job as we accept what He made available (Romans 10:9 and 10). This is the beginning of the Christian life, which climaxes with eternal life. The renewed mind determines how we will walk in this world after the new birth, and it is our responsibility. Many Christians manifest a defeated, miserable life—not a very desirable picture to the unbeliever. As we believe the sonship rights we have as sons of God, we can walk without fear and accept the many things God has made available to us. We sometimes justify our living below par on the basis of humility and meekness. We are afraid we will offend God—we limit God by our unbelief instead of increasing our believing. In the human family we are not offended if our child accepts something we have made available and offered to him, are we? We would be more likely to be offended if the child refused.

Matthew 7:9-11:

Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

God is love, but He can do no more than we allow Him to do, because He gave us freedom of will. Salvation is available, but it is by our choice. The abundant life is available, but only by our acceptance. God's goodness is so far beyond our comprehension that we many times try to whittle it down to our own standards of goodness. We too often try to justify our own shortcomings by blaming God. If earthly fathers treated their children like God is often accused of treating His children, those fathers would be prosecuted by law.

In renewing our minds we learn what our job is, and continued study of the Word builds up our believing so that we can do His will. It is interesting to know about God's responsibilities, such as the second coming, but we should not neglect learning about our responsibilities and then fulfilling them. God is going to fulfill His part. Our opinions will not change one thing in God's plan.

When our minds are renewed according to God's Word, we are able to get our prayers answered. Believing is the key to receiving. Fear is man's greatest enemy. Fear builds unbelief, and unbelief defeats the promises of God. When we have fear we cannot believe; when we believe we will not fear.

Matthew 13:58:

And he [Jesus] did not many mighty works there [in his own hometown] because of their unbelief.

He was the same Jesus who had done mighty miracles in other places. In each instance where mighty works were done, the person or persons believed—they acted upon the words Jesus spoke. Prayer is not always asking God for something—although that is sometimes the only reason we take time to pray. Prayer is fellowship with God—where we can just talk things over with Him (and it pays to take time to let Him talk to us). When we do have something to ask of God, we just present our need, thank Him for meeting it, and then relinquish it to Him, knowing that the matter will be taken care of. It is failing to relinquish our cares to Him that defeats us. Fear creeps in, and if things do not happen just the way we think they should, we become fretful. Do we really trust God, or have we actually just wanted Him to verify our opinions? It is not sacrilegious to ask such questions—it is just being honest with ourselves and with God. What we believe does not change God's Word, but what we

believe does determine what we receive. We say we will believe when we see — the Word of God says we believe (act), then we see.

By acting upon God's Word, can I know that I am a Christian? This question confronts many church people today, although it is not freely expressed. There is a very simple reason for the uncertainty. Denominations have dwelt upon methods set up by man rather than actually studying God's Word. Then when an individual does not respond to that method in the way others have, doubt and fear set in.

Romans 10:9 and 10:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Now let us be real honest and see if our beliefs are based on the Scriptures, or if we are quibbling over these man-made methods. A very fine Bible teacher says, "You can find God anywhere and miss Him everywhere." Again we come back to the importance of the renewed mind.

Denominations have been built by groups of believers who have similar beliefs and interpreta-

tions of the Scriptures. Did you ever ask yourself why we go to church? Such an honest question deserves an honest answer. What have we a right to expect from our church? Is it just another organization? The purpose of the church is spiritual—if we receive spiritual food from our Sunday school and worship services, all the other phases of our church organization will fit into proper order. We will be united in a desire to learn more of the love of God and be inspired to manifest it in our everyday living. We have a right to expect to be edified when we attend worship services. It is the responsibility of every man to rightly divide the Word of Truth. This also must be based on the Scriptures and not on what we think.

CONCLUSION: It is my sincere prayer that this little study will challenge you to search the Scriptures, and that it will be of help in making the Bible alive and real to you. It is our right and responsibility to check any teaching with the Bible and not just accept it because so-and-so said it. The Bible must be our source of spiritual food.

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