

## "You Can Understand the Bible"

The Bible is the best-selling book of all time and comes today in hundreds of languages. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. And this is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." Some think the Bible is too hard to understand. Is it really? Stay with us, and we'll find out.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way. We're here to search God's Word for the Lord's Way. God's way is always a blessing. God loves us and He gave us His will in written form in the Bible so that every age and nation could know the truth and be saved. God wants every person to believe and to obey His will. So thanks so much for spending this time with us. We want to be a part of your life each week. We also hope that you'll encourage your friends to watch this program.

Now some people think the Bible is just too hard to understand. Perhaps you've heard people say, "The Bible is not meant to be understood." Or, "The Bible says different things to different people." Or, "What is important is not so much what the Bible says but what the Bible says to me." I've heard people claim "the New Testament addressed the culture of the first century but really doesn't speak to us today."

Others dismiss God's word by saying, "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere and love Jesus." Then there's the skeptic who says, "You can make the Bible say anything you want it to." Some say, "You just take a passage of Scripture and you read it to a group of people. And there'll be as many interpretations of that passage as there are people in the room."

Well these popular charges against the Bible lose sight of God's purpose in giving us His Word. They seem to forget about God's incredible desire to have a relationship with us that lasts for an eternity. That relationship means that we can know Him and know His will. The Lord Jesus promised us in John 8 verses 31 to 32, that "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

Now if you want to study more about this topic about the Bible and how it can be understood, we offer the information on this program free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study, then mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also stream this program on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org).

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Luke 4 verses 1-4, and we'll see what the Bible has to say.

Our reading today comes from the opening words of the gospel according to Luke, that's chapter 1, verses 1 through 4. "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught." That's a reading from the Word of God. Let's pray together. Father, we're so grateful for Your Word, and that we can know the truth, and that we can believe it and obey it. Father help us to be faithful to Your Word. In Jesus name, Amen!

Is the Bible meant to be understood? Well the answer is yes, but don't take my word for it. Let's see what the Bible has to say for itself. Psalm 19 verse 8 says, "The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes." Psalm 119 verse 18 says, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law." Psalm 119:105 says, "Your

word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119 verse 125 says, "I am Your servant; give me understanding, that I may know Your testimonies." Psalm 119 verse 130 says, "The unfolding of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple." And Proverbs 6:23 says, "For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; and reproofs for discipline are the way of life."

When people say the Bible is not meant to be understood, I wonder how they came to that conclusion. Did they get it from the Bible or from other people? Surprisingly, some churches don't want you to read your Bible. These churches worry that if you read your Bible, you'll find out what the Bible actually says and that it's different from what they teach and practice. The Bible has God's authority attached to it, and it challenges those who vary from it.

The apostle Paul warned in Scripture about this kind of problem, and even in his day there were people who were misusing and tampering with God's Word. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 4 verses 2 to 4, "But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it's veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

Now, the devil will do anything, anything, to keep people from understanding the truth of God's Word. He'd love nothing more than to blind people to the gospel so they won't know the truth. Satan will tamper with the word to convince you to believe something that's only partially true. Now he realizes his message must sound true, or you won't buy into it. And if he tells a lie that sounds true, he might lead some folks astray. And if he can make his lie really appealing, he will. But when people obey the lie rather than listen to God, they're deceived with a counterfeit religion. Now the devil has supplied plenty of counterfeits in our world today.

We wouldn't know what the truth is and what error is if it weren't for this permanent standard of truth in the Bible. You see, the Word of God provides that standard of truth for all time. God's word is settled in heaven and it doesn't change. It's this stability, this security, this solid foundation, that allows Christians to remain united to God. God was wise to give to mankind His message in written form in the Bible, because by giving us the Bible, we can know the truth which makes us free. The difference between Christ's true disciples and other people is that true disciples remain in the Word of God. While the others drift away from the word.

So, we must stay with God's word. God expected ancient Israelite parents to teach their children the Law of God. The Lord God was concerned that a generation might arise that didn't know His commandments. So, Moses commanded them, "At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, at the Feast of Booths, when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live in the land that you're going over the Jordan to possess" (now that's in Deuteronomy 31 verses 10 to 13.)

Now if the Bible were so hard to understand, God wouldn't have commanded all Israel to go through this every seven years. Truly we can understand the Bible. The Bible says in Deuteronomy 29:29, that "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." Now God gave us His Word to bless us.

Deuteronomy 30 verses 11 to 14 explains, "For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It's not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' But the word is very near you. It's in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it." God not only wants us to understand it, He also expects us to love and obey it.

Now the word of God went out to all Israel. There were all kinds of people listening. Well there were the people who might be wise, and then were the naive, there were people who were conservative, and there were people who were liberal, there were people who were educated, the young, and the old. Those who didn't know God's Law were expected to learn the Law and to obey it. My friend, you're not an exception. God expects you to know His will.

1 Timothy 2 verses 3 to 4 says, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." God doesn't communicate in riddles, nor does He hold back some secret message for only the select few, oh no. God wants everyone to be able to know the truth, to be saved, and to live in heaven with Him. Jesus, the Bible says in Hebrews 2 and verse 9, tasted death for every person. Why then would God give us a Bible with the words of life, but give it in a way that we couldn't understand it? That's ridiculous.

When God inspired Luke to write one of the four gospel accounts, He chose this Greek Gentile to write to a Roman authority about Jesus Christ, a Jew. Now Luke didn't grow up knowing about God, and Theophilus had only heard bits and pieces, so here is what the inspired Luke wrote in Luke 1 verses 1 to 4: he said, "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things that you have been taught."

Now Theophilus apparently wanted to know the truth, and Luke said that he could tell him with certainty (that is, exact knowledge) the things concerning Jesus Christ. The Bible was written to impart to us true knowledge, exact knowledge, and the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The apostle John said in John 20 verses 30 to 31, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." Now God gave us this book, the Bible, so that we might believe in Jesus Christ and by believing be saved and have life in His name. Now, I cannot imagine why, if this is the purpose of the Bible, that God would write something that nobody can understand. The fact is: we can understand what we need to know to be saved and go to heaven and to live with God forever!

In the book of Acts, chapter 17 verses 2 to 4 the Bible says, "And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.' And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women." Now the Scripture is not some strange riddle, but it's a book that gives life and tells the marvelous story of Jesus Christ.

From this inspired book, we learn the most wonderful story of love and sacrifice. To some it may be meaningless, but to us it's the most meaningful story in the entire world. I'm so thankful that God chose men and inspired them to write that story down in the first century so that we could hear it, and

we could read it as it really happened, and could believe and obey it. The New Testament gives us eyewitness accounts of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, a story of good news that saves our souls. There simply is no better, no more important, no more meaningful story in the entire world.

The gospel provides God's power unto salvation to everyone who believes it, according to Romans 1 and verse 16. You see, God knew that He had to reveal Himself to mankind, and if they were to know and believe in Him and find salvation. Now we also can know some things through observing the universe, yes, but we can't know the full story, we can't know it apart from the Word of God. Now you remember the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 1 verse 21, "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, then God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe." Now if we want to know the precious truth about God, we must go to His Word. Our task is to hear it, believe it, love it, obey it, and share it with others. Oh, thank God for the Bible!

Now the apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1 and verse 13, "For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand, and I hope you'll understand until the end." Paul wrote no other thing but what the Corinthians could understand, and we too can understand the Bible.

In fact, we must understand the word of God and obey it. Why? Because one day we will be judged by the word of God. The Lord Jesus said in John 12:48: that "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him (what is that); the word that I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." My friend, you and I will be judged one day by the words that are written in this book. We will stand before God and we'll have to give an account for our lives, and the standard will be these written words.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 7 and verse 21: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter." We must know what the will of God is. My friend, the purest source of God's will is found in the New Testament. So don't settle for anything less than the Scriptures. They will lead you to an exact knowledge of the Lord's will. And they will give you the unfailing truth that leads to eternal life. Let's pray together. Oh Father we are so grateful for Your Word that comes to us in written form. And we pray that we may come to believe it and to love it. And that we will obey it and share it with others. And Father may Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen!

Think with me. What kind of God says, "I'm going to judge you by the things written in the books" (that's Revelation 20 verses 11 to 15 and John 12:48), but then gives us a book that people can't understand? Wouldn't such a God be a monster? But our God isn't like that. He gives us a book so that we can understand. Our God loves us and wants all men to be saved and to know the truth. Shouldn't we strive to know His will? If knowing and doing the will of God is the difference between eternal life and death, can we afford to ignore what He says?

The apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 2 and verse 15, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth." God wants us to study the Bible so that we will know the truth and not be ashamed on the day of judgment because we didn't follow the teaching of the Bible. Proverbs 23:23 says, "Buy truth, and do not sell it, get wisdom and instruction and understanding."

I hope you'll follow those teachings and that you'll come to Christ. Now to hear the word of Christ and believe them is a part of what it means to come to Him. Do that, repent of your sins and confess the name of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Now repentance means that you change your heart, you leave sin and you turn to the ways of God. And so with love and faith and repentance,

be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins as Acts 2 and verse 38 and Acts 22:16 teaches. The baptism of Christ is an immersion. And when you do, God will bless you with His grace and forgiveness and add you to His church. He'll make you His child and give you an inheritance with Him. My friend won't you do that? Won't you do it today?

We really hope that today's study of God's Word has blessed you and challenged you to think. Now if you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org).

Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now our programs appear on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). We also offer Bible Correspondence courses, just let us know. We also offer free study sheets that go along with our programs. You can download them at our website or you can call and request them. Now if you contact us, we won't hassle you for money, we won't put you on a list, we're not here to exploit you, we're here to help you get to heaven.

So we ask that you please attend worship at a church of Christ in your area. They're the reason that we don't ask for money. And if you're looking for a good Biblical church home, we'll help you find one. Churches of Christ love and want guests, and you'll be welcome if you go and visit with them. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. Sp we ask that you keep searching God's Word, read your Bible, and tell a friend about us. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.