

## Are You Like The Bereans? By Jonathan L. Perz

You might be wondering, "Who are the Bereans?" Though the Bible says little of this people, what it does say speaks volumes!

*"Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men."* (Acts 17:10-12)

- The Bible says they were "fair-minded!" Are you?
  - The Bible says they "received the word with all readiness!" Do you?
  - The Bible says they "searched the Scriptures daily!" Do you?
  - The Bible says they wanted "to find out if these things were so!" Do you?
- The Bible says "many of them believed?" Have you?

**INDEED, THE LORD'S CHURCH NEEDS MORE OF THE BEREAN SPIRIT!** Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦

### THE ONE BODY

The church is the body of Christ, "And he is the head of the body, the church (Col. 1:18). There is only one body, one church. *"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all"* (Eph. 1:22-23). The New Testament teaches that there is only one body; this one body is the church. We are "fellow heirs of the same body" (Eph. 3:6). We are "reconciled to God in one body" (Eph. 2:16). Christ is founder of only one church. *"Upon this rock I will build my church"* (Matt. 16:18). Jesus did not say that we would build a church, His church or one of His churches. He said, "I will build my church." The word "church" signifies singularity. Jesus did not build many different churches, but one! None should encourage any to seek the church of your choice, but the church of Christ's choice, that is, the one that is Christ-built, blood-bought (Acts 20:28), the one in which He is the Saviour of (Eph. 5:23).

Since there is one, and only one church and since Christ saves only those in that one church; thus, if one living today is not a member of that church (Rom. 16:16), then he is not saved.

*Truth is truth even if no one believes it.  
Error is error if everyone believes it.*

*Don't think you can ignore the Lord in this life and  
He will give you a crown in the Life to come.*

About the Hillcrest church of Christ		
<b>Evangelist: Jimmy Pettigrew</b>		
How to Contact Us	Our Address	Schedule of Assembly
<b>Telephone:</b> (920)499-5677 <b>E-mail:</b> hillcrestcofc@live.com 	1621 Hillcrest Drive Green Bay, WI 54313 	<b>Bible Study:</b> Sunday, 9:00am <b>Worship Service:</b> Sunday, 10:00am <b>Bible Study:</b> Wednesday, 7:00pm* <small>*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month</small>
<b>www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com</b>		

# The Voice of Truth

December 25, 2011

## We Can Understand Truth By Jimmy Pettigrew

With so much religious division in this world in which we live in today, there are those who are going around saying, "We are divided because truth is unattainable, impossible or beyond our reach." Can we not know truth? Please notice what the Bible teaches on this subject concerning truth.

Look with me in the eighth chapter of the book of John; we find Jesus speaking to the multitudes. We read that many of them believed: *"Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are you truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* (John 8:31-32) Notice, here we had a statement from the Christ, the Son of God saying that one can know truth. If we cannot know truth, then Christ lied to us, and then we can't be free. I want you to notice again; when you look at these two passages in John, you notice that their faith had not made them free, nor does faith alone make people free today as some so strive to teach. But I notice that abiding in Jesus' word, knowing the truth and obeying it; these are the nuts and bolts unto eternal life. Friends, how can you abide in something if you don't understand it? How can you abide in something if you don't know it? To "abide in my word," one would have to understand it! Only then could one be a disciple of Christ.

John writes, *"I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth."* (1 John 2:21) What is John saying? John is saying it is not because ye are ignorant of these things that I write to you, but because you know them, and you can by knowing truth, hold up God's word, knowing what it teaches, and say those who teach the doctrines of false teachers, and know that they are liars. You have to know the truth to be able to do this; to be able to tell someone they have contradicted the truth, that your doctrine is a lie. Why? Because no lie can be of the truth. Now you have to know the truth to know what a lie is. A lie here

is any doctrine contrary to that taught by the Christ and the apostles. *"...We know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error"* (1 John 4:6). We can distinguish those who embrace the truth from those who do not. But this is impossible some say, because they say we can't know truth. Again are you saying John lied? One must be careful for truth can be distorted (Romans 1:25). Jesus said, *"If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself"* (John 7:17). How can we do His will if we can't know the truth? How can we know that the teaching is from God or man if we can't know the truth? If we can't know truth, how could we speak the same thing and be perfected joined together in unity (1 Corinthians 1:10)?

Paul tells us, *"whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ"* (Ephesians 3:4). Paul says to the Ephesians by reading you may understand God's word, and His way of saving people, the mysteries of the Christian religion. *"Who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Timothy 2:4). If we can't know truth, how do we know if we are saved? Why would God give us truth if we could not understand it? *"Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."* (Ephesians 5:17) Question: Where can the will of the Lord be found? Nowhere, but in the Bible! We can understand that will, and we must be able to understand the Bible. We can understand what the will of the Lord is, and then doing it. We can know the teaching of the Scriptures; we can know truth and we can understand the word of God. No problem with the word of God; the problem is with men! Truth must be known (John 8:32), believed (2 Thessalonians 2:12), loved (2 Thessalonians 2:10), and obeyed (Galatians 5:7). Only then can it set one free! ♦

Continued on Page Two

In This Issue...	
<b>Page 1 - We Can Understand Truth</b>	<b>Page 3 - HOW TO GET WHAT YOU WANT</b>
<b>Pages 2 to 3 - "If We Cannot Understand The Bible"</b>	<b>Page 4 - Are You Like the Bereans?   THE ONE BODY</b>

## “If We Cannot Understand The Bible”

By Jarrod Jacobs

How many times have you heard someone tell you, “We cannot understand the Bible, so you believe what you want to and I’ll believe what I want to.”? Some have claimed we can no more understand the Bible alike than we can look alike. Is this true? Can it be that we cannot really understand the Bible? If so, whose fault is it if we cannot understand the Bible? Let us look at the consequences of such a position and see how it affects our lives. If it is true that we cannot understand the Bible, then ....

### No Man Has Sinned.

John said, “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (**I Jn. 3:4**). The question that needs to be answered is, how can one transgress a law that he cannot understand? How can he be sure that he is in the transgression and not someone else? Truly, if we cannot understand God’s word, then no man has sinned. Yet, let us study the Scripture and learn the truth. Shortly after God’s creation of the man and woman, they sinned, and God punished them (**Gen. 3:6-24**). The text tells us that Adam offered an excuse for why he had sinned (**v. 12**), as did Eve (**v. 13**). This occasion would have been a “prime time” to just say they misunderstood God’s word. Yet, neither one claimed a misunderstanding of what God had said!! Why did not Adam say simply that he did not interpret God’s law the same way God did? It was because he DID understand it, as did Eve! They understood exactly what God had said, but chose to do something else. Similarly, King Saul was told to utterly destroy the Amalekites (**I Sam. 15:3**). He disobeyed, but claimed he had done everything God had said (**I Sam. 15:9, 13**)! When confronted in his sin by Samuel, he said “*the people*” brought about this sin (**I Sam. 15:15, 21**). Notice at no time in the text did he ever say he did not understand God! This is because he understood!! In truth, isn’t this what men do today? Despite understanding what God says, we sin because we want to do our own will instead of God’s! (**Jas. 1:14-15**)

### There Are No Requirements For Salvation.

If it is true that we cannot understand the Bible alike, then there is no absolute way that is right and no absolute plan of salvation. All people are saved regardless of what they do or do not do (Universalism). Many times, the motivation behind saying we cannot understand the Bible alike

is so folks feel justified in practicing and promoting some false teaching. The end result is that no plan of salvation can be promoted as “the right way,” or “absolute.” Therefore, the false teacher cannot promote his way as “right” either, because no one can understand the Bible alike! How twisted our logic becomes when objective standards are denied by men!

### There Is No God.

It is undeniable that the Bible declares the existence of God. Old Testament passages state this truth (**Gen. 1:1; Ps. 14:1, 19:1, 33:6-9, 90:2**; etc.). The New Testament proclaims God’s existence as well (**Matt. 19:4; Acts 17:24-28**; etc.). However, if we cannot understand the Bible alike, then there is no God. Someone may not “understand” those passages the way we do.

At the same time, if there is no God, then He does not have a Son. Yet, the demons declare that God has a Son (**Matt. 8:29**). The apostles were eyewitnesses of Jesus (**Matt. 14:33; I Jn. 1:1-3**). Jesus Himself proclaimed that He is God’s Son (**Matt. 27:43**). Further testimony can be found in **Acts 8:37; Acts 9:20**; and **Hebrews 4:14**.

Someone may say, “I know God exists, and Jesus is the Son of God.” I agree wholeheartedly. Yet, if this is true, then we CAN understand the Bible alike, and the teaching that we cannot understand the Bible alike is destroyed. If we can understand the Bible alike concerning the existence of God, why not on all other points? We can!!

### There Is Not One True Church.

This is what many would like us to believe today. Yet, Jesus said, “*I will build my church*” (**Matt. 16:18**). In **Acts 2:47**, we read, “*And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*” The apostle Paul declares in **Ephesians 4:4-6** that there is “*one body*,” and the body is the church (**Col. 1:18, 24**). Some will say, “That is YOUR interpretation” of those verses. In other words, they are saying, “We cannot understand the Bible alike.” My question is what is in these passages that cannot be understood?

### The Bible Is False.

The Bible is filled with places that tell us that we need

*Continued on Page Three*

*Continued from Page Two, “If We Cannot Understand The Bible”*

to be wise and understand what God wants us to do. Now, either God was lying, or the apostles told us to do something that we cannot do! Who will lay the blame at God’s feet?

The apostle Paul wrote, “*Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ*” (**Eph. 3:4**). He also told Timothy to, “*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*” (**II Tim. 2:15**). In **II Timothy 2:2**, Paul taught Timothy to teach the things that he had been taught. Friend, what value or benefit do these passages have if they cannot be understood by men?

### There Is No Heaven Or Hell.

The Bible is very clear about striving for Heaven and avoiding Hell! Look at the words of the apostle Paul. He was looking forward to his death and being with Jesus. “*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account*” (**Phil. 1:21-24**). He went on to say, “*But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ .... Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*” (**Phil. 3:7-8, 13-14**). **II Timothy 4:6-8** is also a good text to show that Paul looked forward to Heaven and wanted others to go with him.

Jesus spoke of the danger and punishment of Hell

## HOW TO GET WHAT YOU WANT

If you want friends — **be friendly.**  
 If you want someone to smile — **smile.**  
 If you want courtesy — **be courteous.**  
 If you want knowledge — **study.**  
 If you want a good name — **live right.**  
 If you want to reap well — **sow well.**  
 If you want to be a Christian — **obey God's word.**  
 If you want to go to heaven — **live a Christian life**

while upon earth. His apostles spoke of Hell as well. They said those who will be in Hell are away from God. They are cursed. They will be with the devil and his angels in everlasting fire (**Matt. 25:41; Rev. 21:8**). Was Jesus lying? Did He misunderstand something? Had the apostles misunderstood the word they heard? (**Jn. 16:8-13**) Certainly not!

Most would accept these verses and would teach them to others. Let us remember that when we accept these passages, we prove that we can understand the Bible alike!

### There Is No Reason For Living Right.

Why should anyone live right? “The Bible tells me so”? Think again! How can I know that someone has not put his “interpretation” on verses such as **Ephesians 6:1-4** that talk about parents and children? What about **Ephesians 4:25** and **28** that teaches us to be honest and work hard instead of stealing things? How can I trust the teacher that reads **Philippians 4:8** and shows me I must think on things that are pure, just, holy, etc.?

If the Bible is subject to many interpretations, my interpretation just might be to abuse my children, steal, feed my mind with impure thoughts, and lie about doing it, and there is nothing that God or anyone else can say about it!! Can we see the folly in this type of teaching that says we cannot understand the Bible?

This type of thinking puts a premium on ignorance and lays the blame of religious division at God’s feet. Paul said, “*Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is*” (**Eph. 5:17**). We can understand the Bible alike, but it takes effort on our part, and HONESTY to see things that we have done that are wrong and change them! Let us decide that we will study God’s word and learn what God wants us to do. When we have done this, we will see that ALL PEOPLE can understand God’s word alike! Credit: [www.southside-churchofchrist.com](http://www.southside-churchofchrist.com) ♦