

~ WHY HAS GOD GIVEN US A BIBLE SO HARD TO UNDERSTAND? ~

Christians still read the Bible. It is inspirational and beautiful and has the finest writers in the world. As literature it is unparalleled in its excellence. Still, when we take the Bible as a whole it is difficult to understand. Isaiah said, "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? [them that are] weaned from the milk, [and] drawn from the breasts. For precept [must be] upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and] there a little: For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people"(Isaiah 28:9-11).

When we turn to God's Word we find it firm and absolute. John tells us that "the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). Even when it comes to us from "another tongue" it still "cannot be broken." The Bible has come to us in the Hebrew and Greek. The Jews always were willing to share God's Word they never suppressed it. However, when the Christian church apostatized, the Bible was kept out of the hands of the laity. Bibles were forbidden to the masses. At first it was easy to do. Most people could not read or write and Bibles were prohibitively expensive because they were hand

copied. To insure the Bible was kept from the common people the clergy preserved the Bible in Latin so even if they could read they could not read this dead language.

The Reformers tried to break the Papal oppression of the Bible. Peter Waldo translated the Gospels into French and privately circulated hand-copied manuscripts to the people. Wycliff translated the Bible into English and Luther translated it into the German. Only with the invention of printing was it possible to start printing Bibles in large numbers.

William Tyndale in 1526 translated the New Testament from the Greek and sent printed copies back to England. This fulfilled his threat to a papal zealot who said, "We were better to be without God's law than the Pope's." Tyndale replied, "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou dost."

A present-day library had secured Tyndale's New Testament translated from the Greek and also an Old Testament translated from the Hebrew, which made them stand out in excellence. It used modern

English words which are not understood in modern usage. The library ended up giving the books away because they were never taken out.

For Tyndale's wonderful work the church tried desperately to prevent his Bibles from circulating. When Tyndale shipped his New Testaments into England a man named Tunstall arranged to buy his translation and burn them. Somehow they kept spreading so Tunstall arranged to buy all of Tyndale's New Testaments from Europe and he burned them. However, Tyndale used the money to make a new and better translation to send into circulation. While translating the Old Testament he was apprehended by the Papal authorities and imprisoned for sixteen months. Cromwell tried to intervene on his behalf, but Philips in Belgium acting for the Catholic Church had Tyndale tied to the stake, strangled and then burned. That was more merciful than usual. Clerics were without mercy in that time. John Calvin had Michael Servetus slowly burned at the stake who agonized for five hours before he died. The rationale was that the victim was predestined to go hell to burn forever, so a few extra hours would prepare him for the real burning. Tyndale was spared being burned alive.

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What is so surprising about Tyndale's excellent translation is that it is so heavily quoted in the

King James Version. Still no credit is ever given to Tyndale. Yet God who sees in secret must have appreciated this saintly man's dedication to the Word.

Why Is the Bible So Difficult?

With all the Bibles and all the concordances to help, sincere students today sometimes have difficulty getting a clear concept of what it teaches. This is illustrated beautifully by the Ethiopian who was riding in his chariot reading from Isaiah the fifty-third chapter. Philip was joined to his chariot and asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him"(Acts 8:30, 31). The man was honest and confessed his need of help. We see that Philip provided the necessary help to his understanding and he accepted Jesus and was baptized. Have we not all felt the need of help at times.

A little booklet entitled, "*How to Study the Bible and Have It Make Sense*" has provided many with the help they sought. This booklet provides you with the information that will make it easier to "rightly divide" the Scriptures (2 Tim. 2:15). It is about 50 pages in length and easily read. It shows how the reader can study any Bible subject topically with the help of a concordance. It helps the reader to differentiate between literal and

symbolic meanings. This is very important to the student trying to understand the Word. It also points out the time frames in the Bible which must be carefully observed. For instance Noah preached a coming flood in his day but this would not be appropriate now. The importance of context is essential in Bible study and needs to be considered to be sure the context supports our conclusions. Then the Bible has many "types" which can be powerful in understanding the "antitypes." The book of Hebrews is rich in its treatment of Jewish types and shown to have a grand fulfillment in antitypes.

You may have this little treasure of a book free of charge and without obligation of any kind. Many have found this especially helpful in Bible study and you will find it so as well. We are always eager to help those who appreciate the Bible and who desire to "rightly divide the Word of truth." You will appreciate your Bible much more after reading this booklet because it will provide you

with greater insights on how to study it. Send for "*How to Study the Bible and Have It Make Sense*" it is free with no obligation. It is our most popular booklet. We are students of the Bible trying to lend a helping hand to fellow students. We are not limited by traditions, creeds or theologysola *Scriptures*.

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