

The Old Paths

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“Read Your Bible”

Jarrod Jacobs

The above title is taken from an old tract I have. The little twelve-page tract was written by J.C. Roady (when he lived in Sullivan, IN) and poses a series of questions, referring the reader to a specific Bible passage for each answer. It is a fascinating teaching tool, for the tract emphasizes opening the Bible and reading it in order to find the answers to all our questions.

After considering that little tract, it got me to thinking about something we are currently doing here. We are now concluding a 13-week study of where the Bible came from, and why it is a trustworthy document. We have shown both internal and external evidence that the Bible is true, accurate, and indeed, inspired of God (II Tim. 3:16-17). The purpose behind this study was not to merely impress us with various facts concerning the Bible, but to instill within our minds a desire to learn all that God’s book says. As we have discussed and studied various facts about the Bible, has this stirred within us a desire to know exactly what the Bible says? I hope so.

It is interesting to consider what various people say about the Bible, but we will never benefit fully from the Bible until we sit down and read it for ourselves! Brother Roady knew this truth, and emphasized the need to read the Bible in his preaching and teaching. The purpose of this last quarter’s study was to get people interested in reading the Bible, and

to know for certain that this book we read is true and without flaw. Friends, are we reading our Bibles like we should? This question needs to be answered by me as much as by anyone else. To be negligent in reading God’s book harms me spiritually, just like refusing to eat (hunger strike, anorexia) harms me physically. Thus, the encouragement to read your Bible.

Read

The word “read” is defined as: “*to peruse and apprehend the meaning of (something written, printed, etc.)*” (Webster’s). In connection with this definition, the word, “peruse” is defined as: “*to read through, as with thoroughness or care*” (ibid.). Therefore, when one reads his Bible, he must read with thoroughness or care, striving to apprehend the meaning of what is written. Sometimes in school, this is called “reading comprehension.” This is a way of determining whether or not one understands what he/she is reading. It is no different when we speak of reading the Bible. When one reads the Bible, he must make the effort to learn and comprehend what God has said.

Based on the definition of “read,” I must ask, brethren, are we reading? Many might use their eyes to glance over the page, but if one is not understanding what is being said, then one is not successful in reading. This is not an uncommon thing, for a certain man who served in the Queen’s court was reading God’s word and did not understand what he was reading (Acts 8:30-31). Therefore, he asked for help in order

to understand the prophet’s words (Acts 8:32-34). When it comes to our reading of the Bible, have we asked for help from others when we didn’t understand things? Remember, that a vital aspect of reading is the apprehension of the meaning of what we’re reading. Have we done this?

Some suggestions to better “apprehend” the meaning of a Biblical text include:

1) Read things more than once. Sometimes, it is after reading a passage three or four times that we begin to see the flow of thought, and purpose behind what was written. God expected the kings of His people to read the Scripture and then write it down daily (Deut. 17:18-20). This would be a good habit for the “*kings and priests*” today to have (Rev. 1:5-6; I Pet. 2:9).

2) Read the passage aloud. It was brought to my attention some time ago that the Bible was written in such a way as to be read aloud (Neh. 8:1-3). One good brother reminded me just last week that such practices can be extremely helpful in one’s study. While our society practices “silent reading,” it used to not be this way. Remember, Philip “*heard*” the eunuch reading from Isaiah (Acts 8:30). This man was not reading to himself while riding home! Sometimes, when we combine the senses of sight, and hearing, it helps in the comprehension of the reading.

3) Read Often. God’s word is compared to spiritual food (I Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:12-14). Therefore, to neglect to read God’s word is equivalent to starving the soul! While it is wise to practice some “push-aways” from the dinner table, it is never wise to push away from the Bible. David recognized that the reason he had wisdom was because of God’s word (Ps. 119:98-100). Paul told Timothy to “*Give*

“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk

attendance to reading ...” (I Tim. 4:13).

More could be said on this subject, but brethren, let us ask ourselves how much we are reading God’s word. Have we been guilty of reading about the Bible instead of reading the Bible?

Your

“Your” is a word which shows possession. Therefore, let us be impressed with the fact that one needs to be reading *his own* Bible. We live in a country of freedom, wherein each person can own and read his own Bible if he will do it. Do you have a Bible? I imagine most of our dear readers have several Bibles on a bookshelf, and a Bible on the coffeetable to boot. Why not get *your* Bible out and use it? Stop relying on the preacher, a family member, a parent, Bible class teachers, or anyone else for your Bible knowledge, and acquire your own (Acts 17:11; Eph. 3:4)! Read *your* Bible, and learn the truth (Jn. 17:17).

Bible

This is more than a mere book, it is the Book of Books! In fact, when one looks up “Book of Books” in the dictionary, it gives only one answer: “The Bible” (Webster’s)!

An anonymous writer spoke of the Bible in these terms:

“This book contains the mind of God; the state of man; the way of salvation; the doom of sinners, and the happiness of the righteous. Its doctrines are holy; its precepts are binding; its records are true; and all its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise; believe it to be safe; and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you; food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler’s map, the pilgrim’s staff, the pilot’s compass, the soldier’s sword, the Christian’s charter. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the ways of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand object,

our good its design, and the redemption of man its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be quoted at the judgment, and remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the obedient, and condemn all who trifle with its precepts.” (Martin, Luther, Information Concerning The Bible, p. 25)

Are you ready to read your Bible?

Let The Bible Speak

Jarrold Jacobs

Editor’s Note: Below is a question I received via e-mail last week.]

Question:

On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, were only the 12 Apostles baptized with the Holy Spirit or were others such as the 120 of Acts 1? Or does it really make any difference whom received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost?

Answer:

Hello,

On the day of Pentecost, it was only the 12 who were baptized with the Holy Spirit, not the 120. This is apparent when we remember that Christ promised the Holy Spirit would come upon the apostles in Acts 1:8. Once Matthias was chosen to take the place of Judas as an apostle (Acts 1:26), we read that on the day of Pentecost, “*they were all with one accord in one place*” (Acts 2:1).



Now, who is the “*they*”? The antecedent of “*they*” (Acts 2:1) is the apostles (Acts 1:26). These 12 were baptized with the Holy Spirit, and it was these 12 who spoke in other tongues “*as the Spirit gave them utterance*” (Acts 2:4). Remember also that when the people were shocked, and some accused them of being drunk (Acts 2:13), in defense, Peter stood up with “*the eleven*” (Acts 2:14), not the 111, and preached Christ to the people (Acts 2:22-38).

You also asked whether it made a difference or not, and I would suggest to you that it does. It makes a difference because God made a distinction, and Christ promised the Holy Spirit to the apostles, not the 120. Really, it goes back to whether we wish to handle God’s word accurately, or not (II Tim. 2:15). If we wish to handle God’s word accurately, then when God states things in a specific way, then we will respect that and not add to it or take from it.

I appreciate your writing, and thank you for visiting the web site. I hope this answer will help you in your Bible study.

Sincerely,
Jarrod Jacobs

In an effort to spread the gospel, and help those searching for the truth, this and other questions can now be accessed on the website. Look for them under the title: “Let The Bible Speak”!

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- Wednesday Evening Bible Study ————— 7:00 pm

Don’t forget the call-in radio program on **WBIO, FM 94.7**, Sunday afternoon from 12:30-1:00 pm. **Call: 683-5200** with your Bible question.

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“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk