

# Truth or Chains



## Learning Spiritual Truth

The other evening, I was waiting on my order at a Whataburger and picked up a copy of one of the small local newspapers. There was a religion section with questions from readers and answers from a local pastor. The question was:

Why are there so many different interpretations of the Bible?

The pastor attributed the differences in interpretations to biases and prejudices instilled from childhood and recommended a three-step system for properly interpreting the Bible. The answer was a variation of a theme that's prevalent in churches and seminaries. There are many systems for interpreting the Bible and you'll sometimes hear these systems referred to as "biblical hermeneutics." I believe biblical hermeneutics is man's attempt to apply the same types methodologies used in other studies (history, science, etc.) to the Bible and they just don't work. In fact, biblical hermeneutics is probably one of the primary reasons why there are so many different interpretations of the Bible.

**"The fact that using biblical hermeneutics is useless with the Bible gives hope to all Christians."**

Have you tried any of these systems? I have. I bought the concordances, Greek Bibles, historical texts and many other books so I could properly decipher the Bible. All I succeeded in doing was obtaining dust-gathering books and a lot of Biblical facts none of which helped me in my day-to-day Christian life. Why? Because you can't learn spiritual truth with a study technique! All the learning skills you were taught in school don't work with the Bible.

"Say it isn't so!" you might be responding. If you've spent years studying the Bible with these "systems," and you're honest, you know what I'm saying is true. Has any of that study resulted in spiritual growth and maturity? Think about it; if all you needed to understand the spiritual truths of the scriptures were certain academic methods, you wouldn't even have to be saved to understand the Bible!

But don't be discouraged. The fact that using biblical hermeneutics is useless with the Bible gives hope to all Christians. It doesn't matter if you never finished elementary school or have several Doctorate degrees; any Christian can learn spiritual truth. Let's take a look at a scripture passage and see how.

1 Corinthians 2 (Blue text is my commentary)

v1. When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.

Why did Paul say this? Eloquence and superior wisdom seems to be a requirement in American churches today. The biggest churches have some of the best "speakers" around full of rich stories and charisma. If anyone could have been eloquent and wise, Paul certainly could have – but no, that was not how he wanted to tell the Corinthians about Jesus. Let's see why,

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## Learning Spiritual Truth (cont.)

v2. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Because it's not about Paul! Eloquence, superior wisdom reflects on the speaker. All Paul wanted to do was point people to Christ.

v3. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling.

Now there's a resume enhancer. How many of you who are looking for a new pastor for your church have "weakness, fear and trembling" as a requirement? Paul answers why he came to them in this manner in the next verse.

v4-5. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

Paul's tremendous responsibility was to get his own "wisdom and words" out of the way so that the Holy Spirit could speak through him with the result that the Corinthian's faith would not be in Paul but in God!

v6-8. We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Just who were those rulers that crucified Christ? Well, we know Pilate, a Roman, pronounced the sentence and carried out the execution, but it was the Jewish religious leaders who brought Jesus to Pilate for execution, because they were not permitted to crucify him themselves. These religious leaders were the keepers of the scriptures and devoted their lives to reading and studying the law handed down from Moses. These are the same leaders that Jesus was talking to in John 5: 39-40 "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

All their "study" of the Scriptures did not lead them to the truth, Jesus Christ.

v9. However, as it is written: "no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"

"Wait a minute! If I can't use my eyes, ears or mind, how can I possibly know what God is telling me?"

**"All their "study" of the Scriptures did not lead them to the truth, Jesus Christ."**

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## Learning Spiritual Truth (cont.)

v10. but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

The Holy Spirit! He teaches you spiritual truths.

v11-12. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

When you accepted Christ as your Savior, you received the Holy Spirit. He's always with you and if you listen carefully, the Holy Spirit will teach you "the deep things of God."

v 13. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

Paul wanted to make sure he spoke the words that the Holy Spirit had revealed to him to the Corinthians. If you have the Holy Spirit, you can receive these same words – the Holy Spirit will reveal the spiritual truths from the Bible to you.

In Part II, we will look at the dangers of Christian Education.

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