

“How to Enjoy the Bible”

Week #3 Dec. 13, 2015

“The Bible: Comparing (and Contrasting) Scripture with Scripture and Interpreting It Literally is the Key to Understanding -- And Our Enjoyment”

Review

- *2 Tim. 3:16-17*
- *2 Pet. 1:20-21*
- *Luke 18:18-30 & Eph. 2:1-10*

What have we learned so far?

- **“All scripture”**: EVERY MARK ON THE PAGE of the original writings was **GOD-BREATHED**
- The 2 Peter 1 adds that the scripture, because it is revelation given directly by God to man, is not open to just “any” interpretation. In fact, no “private” interpretations are acceptable to God.
- Think about this. It should be clear what this means.
- **Our Emphasis**
 - *Therefore, because of our necessarily very high view of scripture, we have focused our early studies here on how God intends that Bible interpretation must precede personal application. Our [willing] ignorance of scripture can never therefore be the basis for spiritual enjoyment of God’s Word.*
 - **God word is his revelation to us concerning himself and his work in redeeming a lost humanity through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through it he shows us the way to both**

receive and to participate in his redemptive work here in this dead and dark world.

- So, to summarize what we have already seen in previous weeks, God's word is inspired, even God-breathed, even the tiniest marks on the page of the originals, and it is not up to us to make it mean whatever we wish:
 - It is most precious to him, he gave it, preserved it, and uses it continuously in the lives of men, women, and children for his own honor and glory.
 - We are most dishonoring to him, therefore, if we do not have the same "high" view of scripture that he himself has.
 - **[READ] Psalm 138:2** I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.
 - Finally, to the extent that we understand scripture, we may therefore enjoy it; to the extent that we do not understand scripture, we cannot enjoy it (at least in the way that God intends).

Remember Coverdale's list of questions (which are all principles of "interpretation"):

- ***What is written?***
 - ***Of whom is it written?***
 - ***To whom is it written?***
 - ***With what words?***
 - ***At what time? To what intent? With what circumstances?***
 - ***Considering what goeth before and what followeth after?***

Are these questions guiding our interpretation making sense to you? When we exhalt scripture as God himself does, what alternative do we have? If we take a HIGH VIEW of scripture, can we do otherwise?

Last time, we showed the great contrast between our Lord's earthly ministry and the apostle Paul, comparing Luke 18:18-30 & Eph. 2:1-10. We looked at the similarities and differences, applying actually Coverdale's Principles. Did applying the Coverdale Principles help us or harm us as we sought to understand God's word?

For review, let me explain:

- ***[READ] Luke 18:18-30***
 - ***Note also that only the works of Moses Law are mentioned and faith is not mentioned at all!***
 - ***However, earlier in this context, in the parable of the tax collector and the pharisee although the emphasis is on works and not faith, the tax collector is declared in v. 14 to be "justified" at least at that specific time because he called out to the Lord for mercy since he knew he had failed to keep the law perfectly.***
 - ***The reward for that obedience was stated to be in the ages to come, the gift of eternal life, NOT FOR THE PRESENT TIME WAS IT PROMISED, HOWEVER. That is the contrast with the situation under grace, and it is a great contrast indeed.***
- ***[READ] Eph. 2:1-10***
 - ***The contrasts here are very clear, are they not? Salvation is stated by the apostle Paul here to be "by grace through faith . . . [and] not of works"***
 - ***Paul speaks of works as being fruit, that is, a result of the inward life from God, not legal requirement as our Lord often spoke.***

- ***Paul could not have spoken the Sermon on the Mount neither could Christ have spoken or written the letter to the Romans or that to the Ephesians.***
- ***Why not? Simply because of the very different DISPENSATIONAL REALITIES underlying those revelations.***

TODAY, LET'S CONTINUE ALONG THE SAME LINES WITH TWO ADDITIONAL COMPARISONS, NOW BETWEEN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE APOSTLE PAUL

(remember our purpose here: to see how approaching scripture properly makes all the difference in our understanding and in our enjoyment of the Bible (and of what God is doing today!)):

[READ] Num. 15:32-36

32 And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day.

33 And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation.

34 And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him.

35 And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.

36 And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Some comments:

- ***Note first what this says:***
 - ***The sabbath law was in place as Moses had commanded***

- ***Some Israelites had observed that some were living in disobedience to Moses Law and doing work on the Sabbath***
- ***Moses as administrator of the Legal Covenant inquired of the Lord God as to the proper punishment for Sabbath breakers***
- ***God revealed directly to Moses that the death penalty was prescribed***
- ***The penalty was carried out faithfully by Moses and the people***
- ***Any comments?***

[READ] Lev. 24:10-16, 23

10 And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father [was] an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel: and this son of the Israelitish [woman] and a man of Israel strove together in the camp;

11 And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name [of the LORD], and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses: (and his mother's name [was] Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan:)

12 And they put him in ward, that the mind of the LORD might be shewed them.

13 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

14 Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard [him] lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him.

15 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin.

16 And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, [and] all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name [of the LORD], shall be put to death.

...

23 And Moses spake to the children of Israel, that they should bring forth him that had cursed out of the camp, and stone him with stones. And the children of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Some comments:

- **Note what is written here:**
 - ***A similar act of disobedience to Moses Law was discovered among the children of Israel***
 - ***In this case, a man had cursed the name of God***
 - ***Again, Moses inquires of the Lord, the death penalty is proscribed, and the sentence is carried out.***
 - ***Additionally, it is made clear that this sentence for blasphemy is to be applied in all such cases (v. 15)***
- **Any comments? Clearly Moses Law was a regulation that often proscribed the death penalty for those in disobedience.**

AND THEN, IN GREAT CONTRAST, FROM THE PEN OF THE APOSTLE PAUL,

[READ] Rom. 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

[READ] Gal. 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

- ***Our focus: On interpreting the word correctly, literally, and contextually. When we do that we understand it correctly (with the Spirit's help, of course, as is always needed)?***
- **KEY QUESTIONS FOR OUR STUDY OF GOD'S WORD:**

- *To whom was Moses writing here in Leviticus and Numbers?*
- *To whom was Paul writing here?*
- *For whose obedience was the Mosaic Law given?*
- *What about Paul's letters?*
- *What administration, that of the Mosaic Law or that of Pauline Grace, are we "under" today? What is the scriptural proof?*
- *What does it mean to say that one is "under law"? What about being "under grace"?*
- *Could Moses have written what Paul wrote? Alternatively, what about Paul writing what Moses wrote? Why not?*

What difference does this make as far as our ENJOYMENT of scripture is concerned?

1. There are quite stark contrasts between Moses and Paul. They were each the administrators of their own dispensations, one of the Law, the other of Grace, so we should not be surprised
2. Attempting to obey (and enjoy) each rule at the same time is not only impossible, it is dishonoring of the Lord God who has instituted these governments.
3. Therefore, if we would honor the Lord today, we **MUST** proclaim and embrace his superabundant grace as the apostle of the Gentiles, Paul, so strongly exhorts the believers to whom he writes his letters. Amen and amen.
4. Our enjoyment of the Scriptures **AND OUR ENJOYMENT OF WHAT GOD IS DOING TODAY** demands entirely on this most pivotal point: **IS GOD DEALING WITH US TODAY BASED ON**

**OUR OBEDIENCE TO A LEGAL STANDARD OR ON THE BASIS
OF OF HIS UNBOUNDED GRACE? ONE ANSWER LEADS TO A
LIFE OF MANY BURDENS INDEED, THE OTHER A LIFE OF
UNBOUNDED JOY.**