# **Reading the Bible**

Reading the Bible

Barry G. Johnson, Sr. / General

Discovering the Church / Scripture; Bible; Ethiopian eunuch; Philip talks to the Ethiopian Eunuch / Acts 8:26–40

God intends his Word to be understood and has provided the directions and means for understanding it.

 Introduction:

We need to remember we are fallen creatures. We fall more and more from God’s Will as our experiences follow the natural mans upbringing. Over time we build natural/ worldly experiences/ behaviors that cause our minds to become less and less spiritual growing at enmity with the Word of God. We grow to the point of not being able to understand God’s Way due to our worldly upbringing. So when God speaks to us by His Word it seems odd, peculiar and strange. God is aware of the inclination of our hearts, He is aware of our upbringing which has led us away from Him. So when God speaks to us He speaks to us as:

Father to Son; Adult to Child; Creator to Creation; King to Subjects; Master to Slave.

He speaks with omniscience and to be understood. He is aware of our limitations that keep us from understanding His Message. The Bible is a revival to our souls. That brings us to our first point…

# I. Scripture is intended to be clearly understood

Question #1: Was the the Bible intended for ordinary everyday People?

## A. It is accessible to ordinary people

**Psalm 119:130 ESV**

130 The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.

› God’s Word is perfect. It is not an oracle of technical mumbo jumbo, not a manifesto of higher language for the advanced scholar. It makes the simple wise...

See also Ps 19:7

**Psalm 19:7 ESV**

7 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;

› Now there are parts of scripture which can be difficult because scripture does build on itself. If one tries to make his experiences bible experiences he can go wrong easily...

## B. Some sections can be difficult to understand

**2 Peter 3:15–16 ESV**

15 And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16 as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

See also Heb 5:11

› The Hebrew writer does say...

**Hebrews 5:11 ESV**

11 About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

Answer #1:  Yes , the Bible was intended for ordinary people.

› The Ethiopian Eunich was reading his Bible/ Scriptures and it benefitted him because that is one of the ways God prescribes understanding to benefit from His Word...

# II. God has prescribed the way to understand Scripture

## A. Through public reading

**1 Timothy 4:13 ESV**

13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.

› Ways we achieve this is through our public assemblies on Sundays; Tuesdays; and Wednesdays...

See also Ne 8:2–8; Ne 13:1–3

## B. Through diligent study

**Question #2:** What is it that Paul encourages Timothy to do in 2 Timothy which will allow him to know right from wrong?

**2 Timothy 2:15 ESV**

15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

**Answer #2:**  Paul encourages Timothy to study to rightly handle the word of truth.

See also Dt 17:18–20; Ac 17:11

## C. Through thoughtful meditation

Our natural/ worldly upbringing and experiences are wicked counsel. Sinners teaching other sinners how to sin and scoff at the righteousness of God’s Word. Wise and blessed are those who pursue the Godly wisdom found in the Book Divine. The Psalmist begins his treaty with…

**Psalm 1:1–3 ESV**

1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

See also Jos 1:8; Job 23:12; Ps 119:15; Ps 119:27; Ps 119:48; Ps 119:97; Ps 119:148

› Now the Holy Spirit moved Philip to do what he did to find and preach to the Ethiopian Eunich. The Holy Spirit works a little different today.

# III. Assistance in understanding through the Holy Spirit

**1 Corinthians 2:9–12 ESV**

9 But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”— 10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

Question #3: Does the Holy Spirit today teach us things we do not Know? Does the Holy Spirit work through unction?

See also Is 64:4; Lk 24:45; Jn 14:26; Jn 16:13; 1 Jn 2:27

**Luke 24:45 ESV**

45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

**John 14:26 ESV**

26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

**John 16:13 ESV**

13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

**1 John 2:27 ESV**

27 But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

# IV. Assistance in understanding through ministers of the word

**Nehemiah 8:2–8 ESV**

2 So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. 3 And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. 4 And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left hand. 5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. 6 And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, “Amen, Amen,” lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. 7 Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. 8 They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

See also Eph 4:11–14; 1 Ti 4:11–16; 2 Ti 4:1–5

**Ephesians 4:11–14 ESV**

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

**1 Timothy 4:11–16 ESV**

11 Command and teach these things. 12 Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. 14 Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. 15 Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. 16 Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

**2 Timothy 4:1–5 ESV**

1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. 5 As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.