

# PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path"  
Psalm 119:104*

November 6, 2016

## Can We Understand the Bible Alike?

by Frank Himmel

The Bible is by far the most widely read book in the world. Unfortunately, not everyone gets the same thing out of it. There is considerable variation in interpretation and application. That raises the title question: Can we understand the Bible alike? Some say no, however...

*The purpose of the Bible says yes.* God inspired the Bible writers so that we might know His will. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God" (1 Corinthians 2:12). Why would God direct writers to use language we cannot understand?



*The Bible itself says yes.* It claims it can be understood: "For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand..." (2 Corinthians 1:13). "That by revelation was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote be-

fore in brief. By referring to this, when you read, you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ" (Ephesians 3:3-4). If the Bible can be understood at all, it must be understood alike. If two differ over what it means, at least one of them is bound to be wrong!

*The command to be united says yes.* We are to "speak the same thing" and "be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). We are to "preserve the unity of the Spirit" (Ephesians 4:3), the unity the Spirit made possible by revealing the mind of God to us. If we cannot understand the Spirit's instruction, this command is impossible.

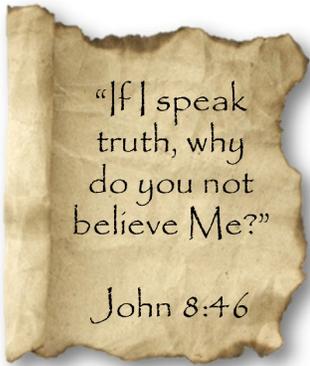
*Common sense says yes.* Three men building houses according to the same set of plans would not build three different types of houses unless some of them misunderstood, altered, or ignored the plans. Likewise, religious differences come about through misunderstanding, changing, or simply ignoring what the Bible teaches. Those who insist on a "thus says the Lord" and who "rightly divide the word" will be united in faith and practice. ■



# Responses to Jesus' Teaching

by Frank Himmel

People respond to Jesus' teaching in different ways. That is nothing new. Consider how they reacted when He was on earth, teaching in person.



The Galilean crowds were amazed at Jesus' teaching (Matthew 7:28). He spoke authoritatively, unlike the scribes they were accustomed to hearing.

The citizens of Nazareth were impressed by Jesus' knowledge (Luke 4:22).

After all, He was a hometown product who had never been to seminary. But when Jesus reminded them of their heritage of not listening to God's prophets, they quickly turned and were ready to throw Him off a cliff. (vv. 28-29).

The scribes were shocked by Jesus' teaching (Matthew 9:3). His claims, especially to deity, were astonishing.

The lawyers frequently argued with Jesus' teaching. They suggested things were not as simple, not as "cut and dried," as He presented them (Luke 10:25-29).

Some were taken back by how demanding Jesus' teaching was, such as what He taught about divorce and remarriage (Matthew 19:10).

The chief priests denied His teaching, even when what He said was obviously so (Luke 20:9-16). The problem was, His teaching often condemned them.

Carnally minded multitudes, those who followed Jesus because they thought it would get them a free meal, complained that His teaching was too difficult (John 6:60). They soon abandoned Him.

The Jerusalem crowd enjoyed listening to Him as He debated with His critics (Mark 12:37).

The rich young ruler went away grieving (Mark 10:22). Part of him wanted to follow Jesus, but another part of him was unwilling to do what Jesus required.

The apostles were on occasion confused by Jesus' teaching. Sometimes they misinterpreted a figure of speech (Matthew 16:11), and sometimes they just had a hard time believing what He said in the plainest of terms (Mark 9:31-32). They stayed with Him, however, and eventually learned.

The synagogue rulers believed Jesus' teaching, but they would not obey it because, in the final analysis, "they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God" (John 12:42-43).

Then as now, our reaction to truth does not change truth. What is your response to Jesus' teaching? ■

## Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Carlos Garcia	Greg Winget	John Baucom
SONG LEADER	Gary Hagler	Carlos Garcia	Albert Harrison Sr
OPENING PRAYER	Greg Winget	Kerry Gray	
LORD'S SUPPER			
BREAD	Jason Chandler	Jason Chandler	
CUP	Chris Brooks	Chris Brooks	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Adam Gibson		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	Josh Baucom
CLOSING PRAYER	Justin Candella	Lee Davenport	Josh Baucom