Our Misunderstood Bible

Intro: The Bible is the world’s most popular book. About 47 are produced each minute totaling about 25,000,000 Bibles, New Testaments, or portions of the Bible produced each year. The Bible is also the world’s most influential book. It influences more people than any book ever produced. Yet, the Bible is the world’s most misunderstood book.

I. Many People Misunderstand The Whole Bible.
   A. Some misunderstand its origin.
      1. They believe it is the work of man, poked off on the world as a pious fraud.
      2. But the Bible is the inspired Word of God.
         a. *The word of the Lord came*, or similar expressions are found 3,808 times in the Bible. *Thus saith the Lord* is found over 2,000 times.
         b. 1 Cor. 2:13 “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”
         c. 2 Pet. 1:20-21 “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”
         d. 2 Tim. 3:16-17 “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”
         e. Proof that the Bible is from God:
            (1) The testimony of Jesus (that He was more than a mere man)
            (2) Unity of the books of the bible and their content
            (3) Prophecy and its fulfillment
            (4) Support of archaeology
            (5) Corroborating testimony of true science
            (6) Superiority of its teachings, its effects on the individual man and the world in general
            (7) Indestructibility: its victory over all attacks
   B. Some misunderstand the purpose of the Bible.
      1. They believe it is a fraud or fable.
      2. The Bible shows us God’s love for man.
         a. John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
         b. This love is manifest particularly in God reconciling man to Himself in Christ Jesus.
            (1) Rom. 5:8-10 “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”
            (2) 2 Cor. 5:18-20 “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us
the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

(3) The result of this reconciliation is peace.

(a) Eph. 2:14-17 “For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”

(b) Col. 1:20-22 “And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. 21And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight.”

3. The Bible also furnishes us to every good work.

a. 2 Tim. 3:16-17 “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

b. Tit. 2:14 “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

C. Some misunderstand its indestructibility.

1. Many have vainly tried to destroy it.

2. The Bible cannot be destroyed.

a. Mat. 24:35 “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” Mark 13:31 “Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.”

b. 1 Pet. 1:25 “But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

c. Even if every Bible should be destroyed, it could easily be reproduced from the thousands of books that quote it.

(1) If it were not possible to reproduce it, it still would not be destroyed.

(2) It would still appear at the judgment to face us.

(a) John 12:48 “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”

(b) Rev. 20:12 “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

d. Poem by John Clifford:

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door
and heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
When looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

“How many anvils have you had,” said I,
“To wear and batter all these hammers so?”
“Just one,” said he; then said with twinkling eye,
“The anvil wears the hammers out, you know.”

And so, I thought, the anvil of God’s word
For ages skeptics blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed—the hammers gone!

II. Many People Misunderstand the Testaments.
A. As a result many people are just as apt to go to Psalms (the Old Testament) as to Acts to find the plan of salvation. This error is the father of many other errors.
B. The Old Testament has been taken away and we are now under the reign and rule of the New Testament.
   1. The Old Testament was temporary.
      a. Jer. 31:31-34 “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: 33But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”
      b. 2 Cor. 3:7-15 (esp. 7, 11, 14 “But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:... 11For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.... 14But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.”).
   2. Gal. 3:16-19, 23-25 “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. 17And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. 18For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. 19Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.... 20But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 21Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 22But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”
   3. The Old Testament was taken away.
      a. Rom. 7:1-7 “Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. 3Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the
body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. 4 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 

But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. 5 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.”

b. Col. 2:14 “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross”; Eph. 2:14-16 “For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.”

c. Heb. 8:13 “In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”

d. Heb. 10:9 “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.”

e. Heb. 7:11-12 “If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.”

4. We are now under the New Testament.

a. Gal. 4:21-31 (esp. 30, 31 “Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. 30 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.”)

b. Rom. 7:4 “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”

c. Mat. 28:18 “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”

d. Thus, we are to hear Christ.

(1) Mat. 17:5 “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”

(2) Heb. 1:1-2 “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;”

(3) His words will judge us; John 12:48 “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”

III. MANY PEOPLE MISUNDERSTAND THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

A. The Old Testament books.

1. They point forward to Christ coming.

a. Gen. 3:15 “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

b. Isa. 53
2. Gal. 3:24 “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”
   a. The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.
   b. Schoolmaster is literally παιδαγωγός (paidagogos), which is a servant or slave who would take the mater’s child to the teacher. He would also have the responsibility of training and discipline (his moral and physical well-being).

   1. The gospels are books of evidence to create faith in Christ; John 20:30-31 “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”
   3. The epistles are books to instruct us how to live in Christ.
   4. In Revelation we see the victory we have in Christ.

C. The theme of redemption found in Christ as seen in the Bible.
   1. Redemption Planned (Gen. 1-2)
   2. Redemption Required (Gen. 3-11:26)
   3. Redemption Prepared (Gen. 11:27 - Malachi)
   4. Redemption Effected (Matthew - John)
   5. Redemption Shared (Acts)
   6. Redemption Explained (Romans - Jude)
   7. Redemption Realized (Revelation)

IV. MANY PEOPLE MISUNDERSTAND THE CHAPTERS OF THE BIBLE.
   A. They think the chapter divisions came from God.
   B. Man is the one who arranged the Bible into chapters.
      1. Some ascribe the work to Lan Franc (died in 1089).
      3. In all probability, Cardinal Hugo (13th century) was the author of the chapter divisions of the Bible.
   C. Sometimes these chapter divisions contribute to misunderstanding because it breaks the thought.
      1. For example; Acts 1-2.
      2. Some think the baptism of the Holy Ghost came upon the 120 (Acts 1).
      3. But when we read Acts 1:26 (“And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.” along with Acts 2 as if there were no chapter break we see that the apostles were the ones baptized with the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:1-14).

V. MANY PEOPLE MISUNDERSTAND THE VERSES OF THE BIBLE.
   A. The verses, like the chapter divisions, were done by man.
      1. The Jewish Masoretes, 9th century, divided the Old Testament into verse form.
      2. Robert Stevens, a printer in Paris gave the verse divisions to the New Testament in 1551.
3. In 1560, the Geneva Bible, was the first English Bible (whole Bible) divided into chapters and verses.

**B. Many people expect too much from one verse.**
1. For example: the plan of salvation.
2. Some expect to find the whole plan of salvation in one verse.
   a. Some teach John 3:16 this way; “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
   b. Some teach Eph. 2:8 this way; “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”
3. But there is no one verse in the Bible that gives the whole plan of salvation.
   a. Acts 20:27 “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.”
   b. 2 Tim. 3:16-17 (all scripture); “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

**VI. MANY PEOPLE MISUNDERSTAND THE PHRASES OF THE BIBLE.**

**A. Mark 16:16** “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
1. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”
2. Some try to get salvation before baptism.

**B. Acts 2:38** “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”
1. “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins”
2. Many try to get remission of sins before baptism.
   a. Repentance and Baptism are joined by the copulative conjunction **and**.
      (1) It is a conjunction that couples words and phrases.
      (2) Both point to the same object—the remission of sins.
   b. So repentance and baptism are for the same purpose.

**VII. MANY PEOPLE MISUNDERSTAND THE WORDS OF THE BIBLE.**

**A. For in Acts 2:38** “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”
1. Some say “for” means because of: to be baptized because of repentance of sins.
2. It means in Acts 2:38 (“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”) what it means in Mat. 26:28 “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

**B. Repentance.**
1. What it is not.
   a. It is not regret.
   b. It is not being filled with sorrow.
   c. It is not simply saying, “I am sorry and I want to make things right.”
   d. It is not simply stopping the doing of wrong.
2. What repentance is:
   a. It is honestly, fervently and sincerely seeking the favor of God.
   b. This is done by turning from a sinful way of life and turning to God in God’s appointed way. This is done by:
      (1) A sincere desire and determination to do right and to be right.
      (2) Godly sorrow; Produced by:
          (a) a deep realization of guilt and condemnation.
          (b) a knowledge of God’s law.
          (c) An abiding faith and love for God and His will.
          (d) A deep and sincere sense of personal responsibility.
   c. Making restitution as far as possible.
   d. Getting out of a sinful situation.

C. Baptism
   1. The dictionary definition.
      a. Sprinkling, pouring or immersion.
      b. The function of a dictionary is to give usages of a word.
   2. This has no bearing on the original and scriptural meaning of a word.
      a. It means to dip or immerse.
      b. Examples:
         (1) John 3:23 “And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.”
         (2) Rom. 6:3-4 “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”
         (3) Acts 8:36-39 “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.”

Conclusion: There is no reason to misunderstand the Bible. Let us study to show ourselves approved unto God; 2 Tim. 2:15 “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”