



April 30, 2018

Have you ever felt that the Bible is a closed book? That it is difficult or even impossible to understand? Many people feel this way because they have never been taught *how* to understand the Bible. People have been left trying to interpret the Word for themselves.

II Peter 1:20:

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private [one's own] interpretation.

God never meant for us to interpret the Word for ourselves; we do not need to, nor should we. Instead, we can learn how the Scripture interprets itself in three main ways: (1) In the verse, (2) In the context, and (3) Used before.

Often, the Scripture interprets itself in the verse right where it is written. In fact, the vast majority of God's Word will interpret itself right in the verse where it is written. Knowing this, we can begin to enjoy reading and understanding the Bible.

God clearly states that He wants us to understand His Word.

Ephesians 3:3,4:

How that by revelation he [God] made known unto me [Paul] the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of [pertaining to] Christ).

Psalms 119:33,34,129:

Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.

Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them.

Let's look at some clear examples of scriptures that interpret themselves in the verse right where they are written.

John 17:17:

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Here in this one verse of scripture is a clear answer to the age-old question, what is truth? Jesus Christ declared, "thy word is truth." God's Word is truth. We can understand this by just reading. Here is another verse that interprets itself right where it is written.

Genesis 1:1:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

God provides another clear answer to a question many people have: how did the heavens and earth come into existence? He explains it clearly and simply in this first verse of the Bible. God created them! No commentary, and seldom a dictionary, are needed to understand verses that interpret themselves right where they are written. The majority of God's Word interprets itself in the verse.

Knowing this key encourages us to read more of God's Word and thus understand more of it. Here are some records we could enjoy reading:

I Samuel 17 contains the record of David and Goliath, which interprets itself right where it is written. In the Book of Daniel are easy-to-understand narratives of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as well as Daniel in the lion's den.

In the Book of Acts we can read about how Peter and the apostles brought the good news of the Grace Administration to the world after Jesus Christ had ascended into heaven. We can also read in Acts how Paul became a believer and how he moved the Word with Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Luke, and others. Each verse clearly builds to the next, so we can just read and read. Right in the verse—verse after verse—we are not only understanding rich records of truth, but we are also growing closer to the Author, our loving heavenly Father!

The vast majority of God's Word will interpret itself in the verse, right where it is written. And if that interpretation is not readily apparent, there are other keys to reading and understanding the Word, which we will publish in the coming months. Enjoy reading God's Word, and expect to see your understanding of the Word grow!

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