

How Readest Thou?

I. Introduction:

A. The saints in Ephesus were told that by reading they would have an understanding of Paul's knowledge of the mystery that was then revealed but had previously been hidden (**Ephesians 3:1-11**).

1. Is that it? Read and you'll get it (**Nehemiah 8:1-8** and **Acts 8:26-40**)?
2. Isn't it possible, for those whom do not know how to properly handle the word of God (**II Timothy 2:14-18**), that reading can do more harm than good (**II Peter 3:15-18**)?

B. Many first century Jews read the Scriptures at least every Sabbath (**Acts 13:26-27** and **Acts 15:21**).

1. The oracles of God were committed unto them (**Romans 3:1-2**).
2. That didn't mean they understood them, wanted to learn, or would do what was required therein (**Luke 4:16-30**).

II. Body: The question of our lesson comes from a discussion between a lawyer and Jesus (**Luke 10:25-37**).

A. Our approach to the Scriptures must be, to walk away from our studies with an UNDERSTANDING of how to please God (**I Thessalonians 4:1-2**).

1. Opening the book with a desire to understand the will of God (**Ephesians 5:17**) and to do it (**Luke 6:46** and **Luke 11:27-28**).
2. Understanding that it is HIS TRUTH, not our truth. Thus, take His will and handle it without putting anything into it or taking from it (**Deuteronomy 5:32**, **Galatians 1:6-9**, and **Revelation 22:18-19**).

B. Our motives in approaching the Scriptures have to be right (**Jeremiah 6:10** and **John 8:39-47**).

1. That means, our hearts have to be right (**Ezra 7:10**, **Luke 8:15**, **Romans 6:17**, and **Hebrews 10:22**).
2. Think about David's counsel (**I Chronicles 28:1-13**; cf. **II Timothy 1:13**).
3. If we're approaching any Scripture with preconceived ideas, we're not going to draw proper conclusions (i.e. **Acts 23:8**; cf. **Matthew 22:23-33**).

C. We have to understand who is addressed in what is stated and properly discern if/how that applies to us (**Matthew 16:1-12**).

1. Think about how many times many of us have heard, or such as I erringly did in the past, have said ;"go ye means go me" because of **Matthew 28:19**. That is not considering the who of that instruction (**Matthew 28:16-20**) or the fact that it was fulfilled (**Romans 16:25-26**, **Colossians 1:23**, and **Hebrews 8:10-13**).
2. Those in the past read Scriptures that were meant only for a certain period of time (i.e. **Genesis 17:10-14**), but erred because they were convinced of them after that time ceased (**Galatians 5:6-12**).

D. Today there are those that read incorrectly. A few examples...

1. They rely on some majority conclusions of what the Scriptures mean, heaping to themselves false teachers (**II Timothy 4:1-5**). Yet, truth is not found with the many (**Matthew 7:13-29**). What good are those commentaries to you?
2. They read the Scriptures as suggestions - as words that God permits to be taken “your way”; instead of the law of the Lord that cannot be transgressed in the slightest (**James 2:10-12** and **II John 1:9**).
3. They read the Scriptures as though there is some margin of acceptable sin. That cause many to consider the Scriptures as ideals instead of expectations. That premise is terrible wrong (**Psalms 4:4**, **Romans 6:1-2**, **II Corinthians 7:1**, and **II Timothy 2:19**) and it is the basis of many false doctrines such as “continual cleaning”. See: https://www.wordsoftruth.net/wecannotlowerstandardofgod_2020.html and https://www.wordsoftruth.net/consequencesofloweringstandard_2020.html
4. They read the Scriptures through topical indexes and are completely ignorant of the context that wholly changes the normally accepted conclusions drawn from that ONE Scripture (i.e. **John 3:16** in the context of **John 3:1-21** or **Romans 3:23** in the context of **Romans 3:1-5:11**).
5. They read Scriptures that support their desired conclusions but ignore those that show those conclusion to be false. For example, those who want to be baptized and then safe from that point forward focus on **I Peter 3:21**, but fail to realize salvation has happened yet (**I Peter 1:7-9**) and those baptized can still end up lost (**Galatians 3:27** and **Galatians 5:4**).
6. They read about the “gift of the Holy Ghost” (**Acts 2:38**) and err because they do not know the overall backdrop of the first century that no longer applies today (**Mark 16:15-20**, **Acts 8:12-24**, **Acts 19:1-7**, and **I Corinthians 12:3-14:40**).

III. Conclusion: We ought to read, carefully study, ALL of the Scriptures as they are our all-sufficient guide to this life, the life to come, the words of our salvation, and the source of authority for all we say and do (**Psalms 19:7-11**, **Luke 4:4**, **John 6:63**, **Colossians 3:16-17**, **II Timothy 3:15-17**, and **II Peter 1:3-4**). That is, unless we handle them incorrectly!