

The “Grace-Unity” Doctrine (No. 2)

Understanding The Bible

by Casey Head

As we continue to examine the fallacy of the “grace-unity” doctrine, it is necessary to establish that the Bible CAN be understood. Those of the “grace-unity” persuasion, in an attempt to justify their acceptance of doctrinal error, will point out that the Bible is just too complicated resulting in our inability to keep it in its entirety. “We’re all fallible human beings, and so who’s to say that you are right and they are wrong,” they will proclaim. In this article, let us utterly destroy this false and dangerous line of thinking. The Bible CAN be understood and obeyed.

Jesus said in Matthew 15:10, “Hear and understand.” Not only were the members of His audience to hear His teachings, but they were to understand them also. Would He have told them to understand His sayings if they were incapable of such? No. In 2 Corinthians 1:12-13, Paul makes a similar point when he says, “For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in *simplicity* and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had out conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; *and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end.*” The word “acknowledge” here in the King James Version is translated “understand” in other versions. So the apostle is saying that we can understand his writings. He tells us in 2 Corinthians 1:12 and also in chapter 11, verse three, that there is “simplicity” in Christ. Furthermore, it says in Ephesians 3:4, “Whereby, when ye read, *ye may understand* my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,” and in 5:17, “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but *understanding* what the will of the Lord is.” The apostle here connects a lack of wisdom with a lack of understanding. These many verses all establish conclusively that the will of God can be understood. It is not some impossible mystery, nor did the Lord write the New Testament in code. It can be understood.

At the same time, we must recognize that the Bible is sometimes *difficult* to understand. Peter said of Paul’s epistles in 2 Peter 3:15-17, “Speaking in them of these things; in which are some things *hard to be understood.*” Is there a contradiction between this passage and the ones in the previous paragraph? No. There is a difference between “hard to understand” and “impossible to understand.” The fact that some passages are difficult simply means that we have to study more diligently to understand them.

Not only is the Bible understandable, but God also expects us to study and obey it. We are told in 2 Timothy 2:15, “Study to show thyself approved unto God,” and in 1 Peter 3:15, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” We must study the Bible with the willingness and humility to accept whatever it teaches. When divisions arise, it is because certain individuals reject the simplicity of the gospel.

Are we promoting an attitude of arrogance when we say that an individual can understand the Bible? No. Rather, we are promoting confidence. Paul was confident, as seen in 1 Corinthians 4:4: “For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord.” In other words, he was confident, yet humble. He felt that his understanding as well as his actions were where they needed to be, but he still recognized that God was His judge. Likewise, Christians need to study the Bible and come to a confident decision about its content, but we also need to be like the noble Bereans who were willing to accept their error if it was proven to them (Acts 17:11). We must be people of conviction!

Would those of the grace-unity persuasion agree that there is simplicity in Christ? Not likely. Would they acknowledge that the will of God can be understood...even the difficult passages? Probably not. It is sad that religious people will ignore, or even pervert such plain passages in order to strengthen their false doctrine. Let us study diligently to understand the will of God!