

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE BIBLE

Psa.119:105

INTRODUCTION:

- A. What good is the Bible?
1. Talking with many different people you can find several who are getting a lot of good out of the Bible, but not like you'd maybe think, and certainly not like the LORD intended it be used!
 - a) One lady uses it as a place to keep her favorite recipes.
 - b) Lots of folks use it as a paperweight.
 - c) Others even use it as a safe deposit box for all their important papers.
 - d) Many people still use it ONLY as a *family record book*, registering births/marriages/deaths.
 - e) The sad thing is that a lot of people have never used it as a book to read, much less study, for any spiritual value at all!
 2. What kind of an answer would **YOU** give if this question were posed to you?
 - a) WHAT GOOD IS THE BIBLE TO YOU?
 - b) If you answer **by how you used it this past week**, how would an observer describe what the Bible's purpose was to you?
 - c) As we consider this question for the next few minutes, and our honest answer to it, we want to be aware of some attitudes toward the Bible [both GOOD and BAD] as well as their consequences.
- B. What attitudes do men express toward the Bible?
1. SOME would have you think it is of only limited value, for instance---
 - a) It's good to read the Bible at weddings to lend a certain seriousness to the ceremony.
 - b) It's good to read the Bible at funerals, where people need reminding of a hope they've been showing little concern for!
 - c) It's good to read the Bible for the moral standards it proclaims, as long **as you don't become too stringent about them!**
 - d) It's good to read the Bible because it contains some interesting quotes that are good to include in speeches or bring up in a discussion!
 2. OTHERS CONSIDER it is of little or no value, and express such thoughts as –
 - a) It was useful in a simpler, less enlightened time than ours, but it's not relevant to our modern situations and problems.
 - b) Such concepts as “miraculous claims” and “sin” are no longer believed or accepted by “men of enlightenment” and should be discarded.
 - c) It is so ambiguous that anything can be proved by it, as evidenced by the division among those religious bodies professing to follow it.
 - d) It contains interesting stories and tales, but these are myths written by men seeking to impose their ideas on others in order to give them sanctimonious feelings of Divine law.
 3. BUT TO COUNTLESS MILLIONS, it is the most valuable and relevant book in the world!
 - a) It is a book from God written by His servants, to reveal His will so that men could know it and render acceptable service to the Creator!
 - b) It is a completely practical book with instructions which, if followed, will cause better relationships with human beings, and will create a personal relationship with that Creator, and will provide benefits that reach even beyond this life!
- C. Since the attitudes are so varied, what should our attitude be, and should we answer the question, **"WHAT GOOD IS THE BIBLE TO YOU?"**

I. SO FAR AS YOU ARE PERSONALLY CONCERNED, IS THE BIBLE DIFFERENT FROM ANY OTHER BOOK IN YOUR LIFE?

- A. Few books have so many authors as this one, **ABOUT 40 IN ALL!**
1. These authors were not contemporaries of each other, but lived at various times over a span of over 1500 years, from perhaps 1400 BC or so to almost 100 AD.
 2. There was no way they could have collaborated or conspired to make the book have such a unifying theme or idea.
 3. They came from varied walks of life:
 - Moses was an heir in an Egyptian royal family who became a shepherd for 40 years.
 - Jeremiah was a priest. **Jer.1:1.**
 - David was a shepherd who became a king.
 - Peter, Andrew, James and John were fishermen.
 - Matthew was a tax collector.
 - Amos was a shepherd. **Amos 1:1**
 4. Some, like Moses or Paul the apostle, were educated. Others, like Peter or John, were noted for their lack of education.
- B. And yet no book written by ANYONE contains so unifying a theme as the Bible!
1. Every part of the Old Testament contains prophecies of the coming of Christ and His death **Lk.24:44-** *"Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."*
 2. Prophecies concerning future events about nations, kings, and battles made long before their occurrence were found to be astonishingly accurate. **II Kings 20:12-19** (re. Babylon)- *"At that time Berodach-baladan a son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. 13) Hezekiah listened to them, and showed them all his treasure house, the silver and the gold and the spices and the precious oil and the house of his armor and all that was found in his treasuries. There was nothing in his house nor in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them. 14) Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and said to him, "What did these men say, and from where have they come to you?" And Hezekiah said, "They have come from a far country, from Babylon." 15) He said, "What have they seen in your house?" So Hezekiah answered, "They have seen all that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasuries that I have not shown them." 16) Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD. 17) 'Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and all that your fathers have laid up in store to this day will be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD. 18) 'Some of your sons who shall issue from you, whom you will beget, will be taken away; and they will become officials in the palace of the king of Babylon.'" 19) Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the LORD which you have spoken is good." For he thought, "Is it not so, if there will be peace and truth in my days?"*
 3. The theme of God's love for mankind and His unfolding of a plan for redeeming him from sin is a thread which runs throughout -- there is no contradiction of any of the authors to this theme, & no disagreement between writers about its truthfulness!
- C. Few books lay claim to having been written by God like the Bible makes that claim, and backs it up by records of miraculous events which confirmed it!
1. It was given by inspiration of God. **II Tim.3:16-17.**
 2. Men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. **II Pet.1:19-21-** *"So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. 20) But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21) for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."*

3. Certified as revelation of the LORD'S. **Gal.1:11-12**- *"For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12) For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ."*
 4. The very words they were to write were taught them. **I Cor. 2:12-13**- *"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, 13) which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words."*
- D. No other book can claim to have maintained such accuracy through the thousands of years it was in the hands of its detractors, nor is there any other ancient book whose text is so well documented by credible witnesses!

II. MEN MAKE SOME TERRIBLE MISTAKES IN LOOKING AT THE BIBLE WITH THE WRONG ATTITUDE!

- A. Often it is taken too lightly!
 1. Some hold that it is a book just written by men, and thus no more useful than other books of human origin.
 2. This position has problems that cannot be answered, including: The accuracy of its prophecies; the universality of its theme; its survival statistics; and the fact that the deaths of 1000's would be meaningless if it is not the message from GOD!
 3. This is certainly not the most prudent way to view the Bible!
- B. Even among many church members the Bible has fallen into disrepute.
 1. They may love for it to be seen on the tables in their homes, but it's often just gathering dust as only a family heirloom!
 2. Some members of the church, with bibles in every room of the house, are also among those lacking in Bible knowledge!
 3. The very bible they say they respect condemns such displays of ignorance in words and actions that many manifest!
 - a) Lack of Bible knowledge results in destruction. **Hos.4:6**- *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children."*
 - b) Search the scriptures...Few do! **Jno.5:39** [*"Search the scriptures..."*]
 - c) Man "**LIVES BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD**"- Does anyone here wish to die? **Matt.4:4**.
- C. Some go to the pages of the Bible only to "prove" they're right about something religious, that they often don't understand, anyway!
 1. Why does anyone feel they need "BIBLE TEACHING" to sustain their beliefs – if they're not going to PRACTICE what God says to? SURELY, not just to look good before others!
 2. Such people do not respect God or His word, for if they did they would go there humbly seeking to find in order to obey and be saved, instead of itching to prove so they can win an argument!
 3. Such a position as this stands self-condemned.
- D. Some open its pages only out of guilt.
 1. SOMETIMES, maybe after a lesson on STUDYING, a few may think, "I need to study more," and begin a haphazard study of the Bible for a few days.
 - a) **GUILT** is a **poor motive** and soon plays out--we won't study for long or very diligently if this is our prime motive!
 - b) **DISORGANIZED STUDY** is generally limited in its benefit and completely uninspiring in its result—because we soon get frustrated or bored and give it all up.
 3. If the only reason we study is because we feel guilty, our spiritual attitude is very poor--we need to learn to love the Lord more and seek Him by faith and obedience!

[Illustration of a man reading a book, and commenting to a lady who asked him about it, "I don't think much of it, did you?" She replied, "I thought it was fascinating" Why the difference? **The author was her husband.** Being in love with the author, it made the words of the book far more interesting!] --The book of God will be far more interesting to us when we learn **TO LOVE ITS AUTHOR!**

- E. Some seldom study it because they are sure [THEY THINK!] they already know what it says.
1. Some think they know what the Bible says because they go to church, and their church leaders have told them something with which they are satisfied.
 2. Others think they know what the Bible says because they have studied it some, even if they studied it with a closed mind – It's been said that some Bible students' minds are like concrete: --all mixed up and then allowed to set until they're hard.
 3. Some don't really know much about the Bible but are afraid to investigate because they are afraid they might become confused --(Don't confuse me with the facts, my mind is made up).
 4. Some already know that what it says doesn't suit them, so they aren't interested in studying it because it is unpleasant to them. They continue in loving darkness because it conceals their evil deeds! **Jno.3:19-21-** *"This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. 20) "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21) "But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."*
- F. Some fail to study the bible because they seem to be **"OVER EMPLOYED!"** [*Got too many other (jobs) things to do!*]
1. This is a common problem in many modern Christian families!
 2. There is no question but that fruitful Bible study will take A LOT OF time and effort.
 3. The Lord recognizes this problem and has told us about it!
 - a) Jesus says this attitude will make us to be fruitless Christians, worthless to God as if we had never heard the Gospel. **Matt.13:22-** *"And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful."*
 - b) We are not our own...**I Cor. 6:19-20-** *"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20) For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."*
 - c) **II Cor. 5:15-** *"and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." We should **LIVE FOR HIM** because **HE DIED FOR US!***
 - d) ***Diligence is required of us, WE OUGHT TO BE EAGER TO GROW AND LEARN! II Pet. 1:10-*** *"..give diligence to make your calling and election sure.."*
 4. This is a fundamental reason why some Christians who have only been in the Body of Christ a few years have far surpassed many who are older in the faith! The eager attitude they have toward understand the truth of God has compelled them to diligent study, which has produced great strides of growth and strength!

III. SO, WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

A. TAKE TIME TO STUDY.

1. We should DEDICATE OURSELVES to reading the Bible **SOME** each day!
2. We need to see that there's a difference between reading and study--learn to study!
3. Include time in each day to meditate, think about, the things we have heard or read, so that they become part of us. Psalm 1:2- *"But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night."*

B. **PROVIDE YOURSELF WITH GOOD TOOLS.**

1. Good copies of the scriptures are helpful in making reading and study easier--Paul had them and used them. **2 Tim. 4:13**- *"When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments."*
2. A good concordance is a helpful tool in trying to find remembered passages.
3. Some reference bibles are very helpful in studying.
4. Don't buy tools and then look at them on a shelf--Use them and they become a part of you (Did you ever see a slick, polished handle on the axe of a woodsman? How did it get polished and smooth like that? Not by being waxed, but by being used.)

C. **RESPECT THE WORD.**

1. Go to the Bible with the understanding that it is God speaking to you. **1 Sam.3:9**- *"And Eli said to Samuel, 'Go lie down, and it shall be if He calls you, that you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for Your servant is listening.' " So Samuel went and lay down in his place."*
2. Plan to obey what you find there, and study to find out what to obey. **Acts 22:10**- *"And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do."*
3. Be humble and respect God's message--don't assume you know more than God does.
4. Be diligent to search out all that God says on the subject so that you will not be misled or deceived
5. Do what you learn to do--many have missed the Bible's point on things because they failed to obey what they learned, then were ill equipped to grow further to learn more.

CONCLUSION:

- A. What is your attitude toward the Bible?
- B. Does your use of the Bible really reflect the attitude you know you should have?
- C. Do you believe the Bible is God's message to us today, which will save us, if we hear and obey?
- D. Why not obey God's commands now?