

How to Properly Understand the Bible: God's Truth, Not Our Assumptions

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Understanding the Bible can feel overwhelming sometimes. There are a lot of voices out there telling us what it means. But if we want to be faithful to God's Word, we need to approach it with care. We can't just pull out a verse and slap it onto today's headlines. We have to read the Bible the way it was meant to be read.

To understand any passage, we have to begin with what it literally says. What was the author trying to communicate? Who was the audience? What was happening at that time? God chose to speak through real people in real places, and those details matter. If we ignore them, we risk misunderstanding the entire message.

Take the word "Israel," for example. It doesn't always mean the same thing. Sometimes it refers to Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel in Genesis 32:28. Other times, it means his descendants, the ancient nation of Israel. And in the New Testament, it often refers to something deeper. It means God's spiritual people, made up of all who belong to Christ (Galatians 6:16, Romans 9:6-8).

So when someone says that modern-day Israel is the same as the Israel in Genesis, we need to slow down and ask, "Is that really what the Bible teaches?" The truth is, it's not that simple.

Another key to understanding Scripture is remembering that God's promises were never automatic. They came with conditions, especially obedience. In Genesis 18:19, God said Abraham must "keep the way of the Lord" to receive His promises. Later, in Deuteronomy 28:1, God said that blessings would follow obedience, but curses would follow disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15 makes that clear too).

Sadly, the biblical story of Israel is filled with rebellion. Time and again, they turned away from God. Eventually, they even rejected the Messiah. Jesus mourned over this. He cried out, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... How often I wanted to gather your children together... but you were not willing!" (Matthew 23:37). He warned them that their house would be left desolate. And it was. In Luke 19:44, He foretold the destruction that would come because they "did not know the time of their visitation."

Jesus wasn't just speaking poetically. He prophesied that the temple itself would be destroyed. In Matthew 24:2, He said, "Not one stone shall be left here upon another." And in AD 70, that prophecy came true. The Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and just like that, the old system was gone.

The writer of Hebrews put it this way: "What is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away" (Hebrews 8:13). It was a sign that God was doing something new.

So who are God's people now? Here's where the New Testament gives us something beautiful. It tells us that the true heirs of God's promises are not defined by ancestry but by faith. Galatians 3:29 says, "If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

God created one new man from both Jews and Gentiles. That is His church (Ephesians 2:11-22). That's spiritual Israel. It's not about a physical nation anymore. It's about people from every nation who follow Jesus.

When we use Bible verses to justify political agendas, especially in foreign policy, we walk on dangerous ground. Jesus never called us to blindly support any modern country. He called us to follow Him. He is our King. Our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20), and our mission is to love God, love others, and make disciples.

Supporting a country politically might be wise, depending on the situation. But we shouldn't claim the Bible commands it when it doesn't. That's adding to God's Word, and that is something He takes seriously.

So what do we do with all this? We trust God. We study His Word carefully. We remember that His promises belong to those who belong to Jesus. And we love all people, regardless of their nationality or background.

God's plan is bigger than any one country. His heart is for the whole world. He's building a kingdom that can never be shaken, filled with people who love Him in spirit and in truth.

Let's make sure we're part of that kingdom and that we're reading His Word with the care, humility, and honesty it deserves.