

## Chapter One

### Understanding the Bible

The Bible was written to be understood. But by whom? There is a sense in which non-Christians can understand the things spoken of in Scripture. They can study the meanings of the words used, the ways in which words are joined to form statements, even the structure and content of paragraphs. They can study the history, the prophecy, the poetry, even the theology of the Bible. But in a very crucial sense, the spiritual understanding of all of these things is closed to them.

Paul expresses this truth in 1 Cor 2:14, where he says, "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." The difficulty is with the effects of sin upon the non-Christian's understanding. Between the non-Christian's mind and the truths of Scripture there stands the fact of sin!

The Christian, however, is in a completely different position. Those who savingly believe in Christ are addressed by the apostle John in the following terms: "But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth." (1 John 2:20-21). John again writes: "And as for you, the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him." (1 John 2:27).

The "Holy One" of whom John is speaking is undoubtedly God, and probably refers to the Holy Spirit. The anointing spoken of, which is given to all believers, is a gift of spiritual enlightenment or understanding which enables the believer to perceive and discern truth. In the context of these verses, this anointing operates to enable the believers whom John is addressing to distinguish true doctrinal views from false views concerning the Person of Christ.