

Introduction:

1. It was Jesus who asked the question. He expected men in His time to answer it. He expects the same of us. The question is found multiple times, **Matthew 12:3, 5; 19:4; 22:31; Mark 12:10, 26**.
 - a. “Have you not read?” Each time Jesus asked this question He made an important point about the Scriptures. Each time, it was in the midst of controversies that He asked His question.
 - b. Would Jesus ask us this question today if we were in the midst of a controversial discussion on a Bible topic? Jesus might hear us say, “Well, I think this...” or “I don’t see why...” And then Jesus comes out with it, “Have you not read?”
2. I wonder how many of us have the Bible text on electronic devices. We live in a world of iPads, Kindles, Nooks and smartphones.
 - a. Reading a book (a book—some of you may remember what that is; that thing with a cover and actual pages that you can touch and turn by hand) seems outdated and old-fashioned.
 - b. There is nothing wrong with new technology. Before the Bible was in book form it was in scroll form. The printed page was a decidedly good improvement over hand-written scrolls! While there is nothing evil about technology, there is something about the tactile feel of a book with pages you can touch that will never be replaced by electronic media.
3. The written word is a vital tool of communication. But the written word is meaningless without the ability to read—and without the willingness to read.
 - a. I assume that most of us who have made it beyond the third grade have the ability to read—to a greater or lesser degree.
 - b. The question is whether or not we are willing to read. Will we spend the time and put out the effort required to read effectively—or are we like many who would rather “watch the movie”?
 - c. Jesus’ question is one that challenges us and asks about our reading habits.

The Lesson:**I. God has given us His word to read.**

- A. Why did He do that?
 1. Because the written word is the sole means He uses to communicate to us.
 2. He speaks only through the written word (though false teachers deny it), not through dreams, visions or experiences, **Hebrews 1:1-2; Ephesians 3:3-5; 1 Corinthians 14:37**.
 3. Look carefully at **Matthew 22:31**. Jesus said, “...have you not read what was spoken to you by God...?” He was referring to what Moses wrote in **Exodus 3:6**. We need to understand that the words of Moses are not the words of Moses. According to Jesus, the words of Moses in the Scriptures constitute God speaking to man.
- B. Jesus wants to know if these men have been reading what was spoken by God. Evidently, they had not read. When men refuse to read the Bible they refuse to listen to God.

II. God expects us to read His word.

- A. That is necessarily inferred from Christ's question, "Have you not read?"
 - 1. There is expectation in that question. Don't think the expectation was just for religious leaders (which these men were). It was for all—for dads and moms and sons and daughters, [Deuteronomy 6:4-9](#).
 - 2. Timothy was instructed to "give heed to reading," [1 Timothy 4:13](#). This would include both public and private reading.
- B. Did you know there is a blessing pronounced upon the reader of Scripture? [Revelation 1:1-3](#).

III. God expects us to understand what we read.

- A. Jesus rebuked the Sadducees for their error because they did not know the meaning of the Scriptures. "You are mistaken..., [Matthew 22:29](#).
 - 1. When we don't know the Scriptures we are liable to make lots of mistakes!
 - 2. Maybe the Sadducees were like some folks today—just repeating what they have heard someone else say. "Salvation is by faith alone." "Once you are saved you can never be lost." "Miraculous spiritual gifts are given to men today." Mistake, mistake, mistake!
 - 3. The word for "mistaken" (err – KJV) means "to go astray, be deceived, to wander."
- B. God's written word can be read with understanding, [Ephesians 3:3-5](#).
 - 1. Do we have trouble understanding some things? The answer is to ask for help; it is not a shameful thing to ask, [Acts 8:30-35](#).
 - 2. Is it a shameful thing to be ignorant of what the Scripture teaches? Everyone starts out in life being ignorant of the word of God. It is a shameful thing to stay that way.

IV. God expects us to obey what we read.

- A. Look at the controversy in [Matthews 19:3ff](#). Jesus asked, "Have you not read...?"
 - 1. Certainly the Pharisees had read [Genesis 1:27; 2:24](#), the verses quoted by Jesus.
 - 2. But their question to Jesus about divorce showed they did not have a heart of faith to obey God's will. Like men today, they wanted divorce to be lawful, and they wanted it to be lawful for just any reason that they could dream up.
 - 3. After hearing the answer Jesus gave, (Matthew 19:3-6), they argued with Him in an attempt to justify themselves (Matthew 19:7-9).
- B. Jesus forces us to ask ourselves, "Why do we read the Scriptures?" Do we read it to justify ourselves? Or do we read the word of God in order to trust and obey?

Conclusion:

- 1. What would Jesus say about your reading habits? Or about mine? Someone might answer, "I don't need to read the Bible; just as long as the preacher reads it and gets it right and teaches it right, I am OK." I am a preacher who reads; I think I get it right; but I have to teach that you have to read!
- 2. Too many folks trust the preacher to get it right. Get it right for yourself—then obey what you read!