

# **How to Study the Bible**

*A Guide to Studying and  
Interpreting the Holy Scriptures*

**Teacher/Self-Study Edition**

**By David Cloud**

*This book is one of the titles in the  
Way of Life Literature Advanced Bible Studies Series*

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## **Ways the Advanced Bible Studies Series Can Be Used**

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## **Tests and Teacher Score Sheets Are Available Separately**

A lot of time and effort has gone into the creation of the review questions and tests, which are carefully designed to draw the student's attention to the most important points and to help him remember these points long after the course is finished. There are no fluff questions and no mere busy work that wastes the student's time with things of no consequence. Each question is important and deals with things that the Bible student needs to keep in mind beyond the life of the course. The SECTIONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS go over all of the important points in the lessons, thus pointing the student's attention to the most significant material and preparing him for the sectional tests. The SECTIONAL TESTS are drawn from the most important of the review questions. And the FINAL TEST draws from the most important of the sectional tests. Thus each test focuses the student's attention in more closely on the things that he should take away from

the course and helps him remember these things by repeating them throughout the review and testing process.

If you take the courses by yourself, don't skip over the review questions and tests. Get the test books (and don't cheat yourself by looking at the answers) and find someone who will test you on the material. It is a very important part of the learning process.

(The previous description doesn't apply to some of the earlier courses such as The Four Gospels.)

# THE AUTHOR'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BIBLE

I have delighted in the Bible for 35 years, but for the first 23 years of my life I did not care anything about it, in spite of the fact that my parents faithfully took me to church when I was a boy. They lovingly bought me Bibles as I was growing up, but as far as I can remember I had no interest in them. I cannot recall even one time when I opened my Bible to read and study it for myself. I knew the well-known Bible stories by heart, and I knew the books of the Bible, and I even won Bible sword drills by being the first to find a certain passage; but I did not understand the meaning of the Bible and I saw no personal benefit in it for my daily life. The reason was that I had never repented toward God and received Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior (Acts 20:21). I was baptized when I was about 10 years old and joined the church, but it was an empty thing.

The Bible says, *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* (2 Cor. 5:21). True salvation makes a powerful change in one's life, but there was no change in me. Though I was in church, my heart was in the world, and I sought the things of the world. When I went to church, my thoughts were not on the Bible and the things of Christ; my thoughts were on foolishness and on my worldly friends. Titus 1:16 describes my sad condition perfectly: *"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."*

My relationship with the Bible in those days was all "head knowledge." There was no heart relationship with Christ, and when that is the case, the Bible is a closed book. As soon as I was old enough, I quit going to church. I was about 16 years old at the time, and I did not go back to church or have anything further to do with the Bible for several dark years.

One glorious day in late summer 1973, though, the Lord had mercy upon a prodigal son and He sent a Christian man named Ron Walker to help me find my way back to the Bible. This man loved the Word of God so much that he had memorized large portions by heart and he could show you exactly what the

Bible said about practically anything you were thinking. He was a walking Bible concordance! By the grace of God and through the prayers of my mom and dad and my godly maternal grandmother, my path crossed with Ron's. He spent about four days with me, showing me what the Bible says about all of the foolish things I believed at the time.

I was a voracious reader even when I was not saved, and through foolish books and the influence of various people I met in my worldly travels, I had gotten involved in Hinduism and New Age and various other vain philosophies. I had spent a year and a half in Vietnam with the U.S. Army, and I spent a lot of time reading and discussing philosophy with unsaved buddies. After I returned to the States I became infatuated with Hinduism and joined the Self-Realization Fellowship Society.

Ron didn't know anything about the philosophies and religions that I was involved with, but he did know the Bible. We traveled together from near Miami, Florida, to Mexico via Brownsville, Texas, and then back to Daytona Beach, Florida. All along the way, I was trying to impress Ron with my philosophical views and attempting to convince him of the glories of New Ageism, but for his part he simply quoted the Bible.

At first, I was very impressed with his knowledge of the Scriptures and very interested in what he was saying, but after a couple of days I became frustrated, and I said to him, "Don't you have any thoughts of your own? All you do is quote from the Bible!" He replied something to the effect that his thoughts were not important but the Bible is the very Word of God.

I said, "I trust my heart."

He replied, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*" (Jer. 17:9).

I said, "I must go the way that seems right to me."

He replied, "*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*" (Prov. 14:12).

I said, "How can a man know if the Bible is true?"

He replied, "*If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself*" (Jn. 7:17).

I said, “There are many religions that lead to God.”

He replied, “*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12).

It went like that for about four days.

At the end of those days, we got a motel room in Daytona Beach and decided we would split up the next day and go our separate ways. Because of the books I had read about gurus in the Himalayas, I was thinking that I needed to find some mountains and I would discover God there, but by the grace of our blessed God, my heart was opened that night like Lydia’s long ago (Acts 16:14). I became strangely calm and my fretful compulsion to dispute the Bible left me, and for the first time in my life I started really listening to the Scriptures. That night I repented of my wicked sin before God and I had confidence that Jesus had died for me and I put my faith in Him. And that very night I became a fundamentalist Bible believer, meaning one who believes and has a zeal for every word in the Bible! I have never doubted one word of the Scriptures since that day, and how I thank God for it.

The next day we had breakfast together, and Ron started off in another direction to find another needy soul (I have never seen him again), while I headed back home to make things right with my parents and to start my new Christian life. I had an intense desire to learn everything I could about the Bible. I read it through probably three times that first year, and I not only read it, I studied it diligently, for hours a day. And there was nothing tedious about it; it was pure joy! How my heart thrilled that I had the very Word of God in my hands and that I could literally know the thoughts of God and His will for my life. I had Christ’s promise that I could know the truth and it would set me free (John 8:31-32). I had wasted many years, but now I didn’t want to waste another day.

I memorized hundreds of verses during those first few years, plus many individual chapters and the book of Colossians. Ron had given me a *Strong’s Concordance* and had shown me how to use it, so from the very first day of my new Christian life I understood the value of this amazing tool. That first year alone I looked up hundreds of words to find their definitions and to commit them to memory.

Before I went off to Bible School about a year after I was saved, I made my own



thick topical study book filled with the studies that I had mined from the Scriptures. By the time I took a formal course in Bible doctrine, I already had a firm foundation in what the Bible said about the major subjects because I had studied them on my own.

Even though I was not saved when I was a boy, all of the Scriptures that I had learned came back to me and it gave me a good start in my Christian life. It is never in a waste of time to teach children the Bible!

When I was about six months old in the Lord, I wrote my first booklet. It was about the dangers of rock music, because that had been my lifestyle for many years. Within that first year, I wrote many other booklets; and by the time I was four years old in the Lord, I had written my first major book. It was titled "Avoiding the Snare of Seventh-day Adventism." It was published by Challenge Press in Little Rock, Arkansas, and is still in print today. I did the research for and wrote most of it when I was still in Bible School. I was learning how to discern sound Christian teaching from heresy.

I developed a filing system that consisted of hand-written quotes on index cards that I gleaned from my constant reading. By the time I graduated from Bible School, this index system consisted of thousands of cards.

From that day to this, I have loved the Bible and I have never ceased to study it diligently; but let me hasten to say that it is not my doing. I don't want anyone to think that I am tooting my own horn. Far from it; I stand in amazement at what the Lord has done for and through me. At my best I am an unworthy servant of the Lord. Before I was saved, I was the epitome of inconsistency and foolishness. I got involved in every sort of wickedness, and there was zero stability in my life. The only thing I completed during those dark years was a term in the Army. Somehow I finished my three years in the military and received an honorable discharge, but even at that, I made no effort to excel. Before and after the Army, I merely jumped from job to job, from place to place, and from philosophy to philosophy. Thus, my steadfastness in the Bible and in the things of Christ for these past 34 years is certainly not my own doing. It is purely and simply the grace of God, and how I thank Him for it.

The Bible is the greatest treasure in this sin-cursed world. It is far more valuable than the wisest Christian even begins to understand.

My earnest prayer to God is that He will use this course ["How to Study the

Bible”] to bring the joy of effectual Bible study to many people, and that it may help many of God’s people to be excited about the Bible in these dark days and to help protect them from the wiles of the Devil and the machinations of false teachers.

In the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

David Cloud

November 3, 2007

# WHAT WILL THIS COURSE DO FOR YOU?

**T**his course on *How to Study the Bible* can provide the student with a valuable, eight-fold benefit, as follows:

1. It will help you learn how to understand the Bible. We are convinced that if a believer will apply the lessons of this course, the Bible will become a new book to him. It will open up the meaning of the Bible as a whole, of the individual books of the Bible, and of individual passages, verses, and Bible words.

2. It will teach you how to use the best Bible tools effectively, such as a concordance, a topical study guide, cross-references, a study Bible, a Bible dictionary, and a Bible commentary.

3. It will help you learn how to study the Bible fruitfully, so that you will be excited about your Bible study and you can apply it to your life and grow spiritually.

4. It will help you learn how to be persistent in your Bible study even when you become discouraged or bored or distracted. Every Bible student goes through periods of dryness, periods during which Bible study is not very exciting, when the mind wanders aimlessly. This course gives a wealth of practical tips for how to get through these periods.

5. It will give you many fresh ideas for studying the Bible. You will find literally hundreds of ideas to make your own Bible study more exciting and beneficial.

6. It will help you understand the difficult things in the Bible, including parables, Old Testament types, perceived contradictions, and difficult doctrinal passages. Not only will you be shown the solution to many of the difficulties, but you will also learn how to solve Bible difficulties for yourself.

7. It will help you to teach the Bible to others. Hebrews 5:12 says that every believer should be a teacher. This does not mean that every Christian is to be a preacher or that he or she should have his own Bible class. It means that every believer should be able to help family, friends, and acquaintances better understand the things of God. This is a very dark and needy world. Most people

do not know the truth of God's Word. It is incumbent upon every child of God to do everything he can to help others come to the light. To do that requires knowledge of God's Word. When Philip met the Ethiopian eunuch in the desert, the eunuch was reading from Isaiah 53. Philip asked him if he understood what he read, and the eunuch replied candidly and wisely, "*How can I, except some man should guide me?*" Philip was so knowledgeable of his Bible, that he was able to begin at that very passage and teach the man about Christ (Acts 8:30-35). This should be the goal of every believer, and this course will help you to accomplish this task.

8. It will protect you from being confused by false doctrine. The world is literally full of false teachers. The Bible warns of this danger repeatedly. Jesus warned about false teachers (Matt. 7:15; 24:4, 5, 11, 24). The apostles warned about false teachers (2 Cor. 11:4; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 4). The New Testament warns that spiritual deception will grow worse and worse as the church age progresses and the coming of Christ draws nearer (2 Tim. 3:13). The child of God is often confronted with false teachings soon after he is saved, if not before. When I was a brand new Christian, I was almost immediately confronted with a wide variety of heresies, such as Seventh-day Adventism, the Worldwide Church of God, and Mormonism. I encountered Seventh-day Adventism through a book I found in a public library. I found the Worldwide Church of God on the radio, and I encountered Mormonism through an old friend. As time has passed I have been confronted with many other false teachings. The only way to overcome them is through a strong knowledge of God's Word. This course will help you learn how to do this.

# TWO KEY BIBLE PASSAGES ON STUDY

## HOW TO BE A NOBLE CHRISTIAN

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

The Greek word for “noble,” *eugenes*, is also translated “nobleman.” Thus, in God’s eyes the true nobleman is the humble believer who diligently searches the Scriptures every day. His nobility might not be evident in this world. He might not be able to walk into the palaces of the high and mighty in this present dispensation, and he may never travel through a city in a motorcade of chauffeur-driven limousines preceded by a police escort. But one of these days, and it is not that far away, the faithful believer’s nobility will be very evident. He will hear “*well done, thy good and faithful servant*” from the lips of the King of kings, and he will receive a crown of authority to rule and reign with Christ.

The very foundation for the kind of Christian life that pleases the Lord is an intimate relationship with the Scriptures after the fashion of the noble Bereans of old. Note the characteristics of their zeal for the truth:

1. They received the Word of God with all readiness of mind. Their hearts were fixed to know the truth and to obey it whatever the cost. They did not try to shape God’s Word to their own thinking. They believed that God had spoken and they wanted to know what He was saying. Their minds were not closed; they were ready to receive.

2. They searched the Scriptures daily. The Greek word for “search,” *anakrino*, is elsewhere translated “ask,” “question,” “discern,” “examine,” and “judge.” This does not describe a half-hearted, haphazard reading of a few verses from time to time. It refers to a very vigorous regime of systematic study.

3. They tested everything by the Scriptures. This is not popular in these end times. The Christian is expected to be tolerant of other people’s opinions. Even if he does not agree with something, he is supposed to keep quiet and allow others the freedom to think and act differently. But that is not what we see in the Bereans. They refused to accept anything unless it was confirmed by the

Scriptures. They were “sticklers” for the truth. It is certain that they would not have been popular in this ecumenical age.

My friends, let us be Bereans in our relationship with the Holy Bible, so that at the end of this earthly pilgrimage we will receive God’s commendation. There is no need to envy the nobility of this present world. Their wealth and high station will soon pass away. The believer, though, has the privilege of being noble before God both in this world and in the next.

### **GOD’S COMMAND TO STUDY THE SCRIPTURES**

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

In this important verse we have a direct command from God for Christians to study His Word. Note some of the lessons:

1. We are to labor in the study of God’s Word. Two words in this verse remind us of the zeal and diligence that is to be applied to the study of the Scriptures. One word is “workman,” describing a person who labors at some endeavor. The other word is the word “study.” It is from the Greek word *spoudazo*, which means “to use speed, i.e. to make effort, to prompt or earnest.” It is elsewhere translated “be diligent” (2 Tim. 4:9, 21), “give diligence” (2 Pet. 1:10), “endeavour” (Eph. 4:3; 2 Pet. 1:15), and “labour” (Heb. 4:11).

2. We will give account for our Bible study. Professing Christians often neglect the Bible in their daily lives, but the Word of God tells us that the believer will either be approved or ashamed before God depending on how he handled the Scriptures.

3. The Bible is God’s Word, not man’s, thus it cannot be treated like any other book. Yet professing Christians in these end times treat the Bible in such a careless fashion. They are not afraid to change it. They are not afraid to say there are errors in it. They are not afraid to claim that God has not preserved it. My friends, we must not be deceived by this careless attitude. The Bible is not merely another book; it is God’s Book, and it must be handled in a very fearful, reverential manner.

4. God will enable the believer to rightly understand the Bible. The ecumenical mindset today claims that every type of interpretation is legitimate, that we

cannot be sure whether or not we have the right doctrine, and we should therefore not be dogmatic in our approach to doctrine. Because of my writings and the very public nature of my ministry, I have received countless letters and e-mails charging me with narrow-mindedness in my position on the Bible. They say, “Who do you think you are to believe that you can know the truth and that others who differ with you do not?” Though I am well aware of my limitations as a puny and sinful man, at the same time, *why would God command me to rightly divide His Word if He were not going to give me the ability to do that?* It makes no sense.

5. The Bible must be rightly interpreted. The phrase “rightly divide” is from the Greek word *orthotomeo*, meaning “to make a straight cut, i.e. (figuratively) to dissect (expound) correctly the divine message.” This tells us that there are also wrong ways to interpret the Bible. Even in the beginning of the church age men were already mishandling the truth. Peter reminds us of this in 2 Peter 3:16 – “*As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.*” False teachers misuse the Scriptures. First, they wrest things out of context. Second, they put false meanings upon Bible words. Third, they read their false doctrine into verses instead of allowing the Scripture to speak naturally according to its own context. If this was happening among professing Christians 2,000 years ago, how much more is it happening today! Paul warned that “*evil men and seducers shall wax WORSE AND WORSE, deceiving, and being deceived*” (2 Tim. 3:13). We must be very careful in our handling of the Scriptures, and we must be on guard continually for false teachers who would lead us astray.

6. The Bible is “the word of truth.” If there is any admixture of error in the Scripture, this description is a lie. Either the Bible is wholly true, or it is wholly a lie. There is no middle ground here. I, for one, have cast my lot with those who believe it is wholly truth. Do not allow anyone to take away your confidence in the Scripture. Casting doubt upon any portion of the Scripture is the work of the Devil, regardless of whether the one promoting the doubt is a modernist, an evangelical, or a fundamentalist.

Our desire in this course is to help the child of God rightly divide the word of truth that we might have the joy of knowing the truth in this life and that we might hear the approval of the Lord in the next.

# STUDYING THE RIGHT BIBLE

**A**t the very outset of these studies, we must say something about THE DEPENDABILITY OF THE ENGLISH AUTHORIZED VERSION, THE KING JAMES BIBLE. As we will note later on, if one is going to study the Bible effectively it must be studied as the holy, inspired, authoritative Word of God. To be most effective in his work, the Bible student must have complete confidence in his Bible. That means that in the midst of the confusion of a multiplicity of Bibles today one must know where to find the right Bible. There are dozens of different versions available in English. As one wise preacher has said, “Things that are different are not the same.” We do not believe that God inspired or preserved a plethora of Bibles.

God has promised to preserve His Word, and we are convinced that we have the preserved Word of God in the English language in the King James Bible. There are several ways that it is superior to other English versions: Its underlying text is superior to the modern critical text. Its language is simple and powerful. Its translational techniques produced an accurate rendering of the Greek and Hebrew text. Furthermore, it underwent a process of purification that has never been equaled, beginning with Tyndale’s masterful English translation in 1524, proceeding through a number of scholarly revisions, culminating in the Authorized Version of 1611. The new versions, with their textual corruptions and linguistic innovations, create far more problems than they solve. The difficulty of understanding the slight antiquation of the King James Bible can be overcome by a little study and by the judicious use of a few good tools, as we will demonstrate in this course.

**Following are two serious errors that pertain to the modern Bible versions:**

(This is a subject that needs to be understood properly, and for that we recommend the *Advanced Bible Studies Series* course “The Bible Version Issue.”)

***Problem Number One: Modern versions are based on the wrong Greek New Testament.***

*FACTS EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE BIBLE’S HISTORY:*



(1) *The Bible was completed by the apostles and received by the early churches* (John 16:13; Jude 3; Rev. 22:18-19; 1 Thess. 2:13). The giving and reception of the New Testament Scriptures was not the haphazard thing that most works on the history of the Bible presume. The Holy Spirit gave the words of the inspired books, and He further enabled the early churches to discern between inspired and uninspired writings. The church at Thessalonica, for example, knew that it was receiving the Word of God and not merely the words of men (1 Thess. 2:13). We understand these things by faith (Heb. 11:6).

(2) *There was a great attack upon the pure Scripture in the centuries following the death of the apostles.* Bible scholar Frederick Scrivener said that “the worst corruptions to which the New Testament has ever been subject, originated within a hundred years after it was composed” (*A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, 1894, pp. 264-65). The second, third, and fourth centuries witnessed the rise of Gnosticism, Adoptionism, Sabellianism, Arianism, and many other heresies. False gospels such as the Gospel of Nicodemus, the Gospel of Thomas, and the Gospel of Barnabas were brazenly written. And an influential heretical school arose in Alexandria, Egypt, a hotbed of theological error. Heretics such as Origin and Eusebius, who were associated with this school, made changes to some of the biblical manuscripts. Frederick Nolan warned that “in some instances the genuine text had been wholly superseded by the spurious editions” (Nolan, *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, 1815, pp. 469). It is thus very suspicious that the Greek text favored by modern textual critics and the text that underlies the modern Bible versions is called the “Egyptian” or “Alexandrian” text because it is based on manuscripts recently discovered from that part of the world and dating to the third and fourth centuries!

(3) *The Bible went through the Dark Ages during which the Roman Catholic Church tried to keep the Bible out of the hands of the people.* Countless copies of the Scriptures were burned, and multitudes of believers were put to death for possessing them. It was illegal to translate the Bible without special permission from the Catholic authorities, and that permission was almost never granted. Many translators were burned at the stake, including William Tyndale and John Rogers, who were two of the fathers of our English Bible. Most of the biblical record from the Dark Ages was destroyed, but we know by faith that God preserved the Scriptures during this period. Jesus said, “... one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Mat. 5:18).

(4) *In the 1500s the Bible emerged out of the Dark Ages and the first Greek New Testament was printed in 1516.* It was called “the received text,” because Protestant and Baptist Christians of those days believed it was the one God had preserved. It was translated into the major languages of the world. From the 1500s to the 1800s God’s people had confidence that their Bibles were preserved by God.

“The Old Testament in Hebrew . . . and the New Testament in Greek . . . being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them” (Westminster Confession of Faith, **1648**; also London Baptist Confession of **1677** and the Baptist Philadelphia Confession of **1742**)

(5) *The Received Greek New Testament was challenged in 1881 with the publication of the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament in England.* This was the product of “modern textual criticism,” which treated the Bible like any other book. The English Revised Version of 1881 was based on the Westcott-Hort critical text. Since then, there have been two competing Greek New Testaments. Most of the modern versions have been based on the new Greek text, and this includes the Revised Standard Version, the American Standard Version, the New American Standard Version, and the New International Version.

Among other problems that could be mentioned, the new Greek text contains many doctrinal corruptions and these have been carried along into the modern Bible versions. No doctrine is removed entirely by these corruptions, but doctrine is weakened, which is a serious matter. Consider the following example:

#### *Doctrinal Corruptions Pertaining to the Deity of Jesus Christ*

John 1:14; 1:18; 3:16; 3:18 — The NI and most other modern versions omit “begotten,” thereby removing an important witness to the uniqueness of Christ as the only begotten Son of God. Christ is not the only son of God. Adam is called the son of God (Lk. 3:38); angels are called sons of God (Job 1:6); Christians are called sons of God (Phil. 2:15). Christ IS the “only begotten son of God,” though, just as the KJV correctly affirms.

John 1:27 — The phrase “*is preferred before me*” is omitted. Evangelist Chuck

Salliby notes: “Each little expression such as ‘is preferred before me,’ like so many pieces in a puzzle, was designed to make its own contribution to the completed picture of Christ on the Bible page--His Person, works, character, incomparableness, etc. Yet, they are systematically left out wherever possible in the NIV. This is indeed a strange practice. While a secular book generally exaggerates the depiction of its main character, the NIV depreciates that of its own” (Salliby, *If the Foundations Be Destroyed*, p. 21).

John 3:13 — The modern versions delete “which is in heaven,” thus removing this powerful witness to Christ’s divine omnipresence. One of the traditional evidences that Jesus is God is that He has the characteristics of God, and when the passages demonstrating those characteristics are corrupted, the evidence for Christ’s Deity is weakened.

Acts 8:37 — The entire verse is omitted in most modern versions, and this removes a powerful witness to Christ’s deity.

Acts 20:28 — The phrase “*the church of God*” is changed in most modern versions to “the church of the Lord.” This change is significant because ancient heretics such as Arians and modern heretics such as Unitarians and Jehovah’s Witnesses make a distinction between Jesus as “the Lord” and Jesus as “God.” If it was “God” that purchased the church with His own blood, then the Jesus that died on the cross is clearly God and there is no room for heretical depravation; but if it were a more ambiguous “Lord” that purchased the church, then there is more room for the doctrine of ancient and modern heretics that while Jesus is Lord he is not the same as God.

Romans 14:10 — In this verse “the judgment seat of Christ” is changed to “the judgment seat of God.” When we compare Isaiah 45:23, the “judgment seat of Christ” identifies Jesus Christ directly as Jehovah God, whereas the “judgment seat of God” does not. Thus, this change significantly weakens the Bible’s overall testimony to Christ’s deity.

1 Corinthians 15:47 — The modern versions, following the critical Greek text, omit “the Lord,” thus removing this powerful and important witness to Christ’s deity.

Ephesians 3:9 — By omitting the crucial phrase “*by Jesus Christ*,” the modern versions destroy this verse’s powerful witness that Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things. This verse as it stands in the Greek Received Text and the KJV and

other Reformation Bibles also teaches us that Jesus was not created, since “ALL things” were created by him.

1 Timothy 3:16 — The modern versions omit the word “God.” The NIV, for example reads, “Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.” Terance Brown, former secretary of the Trinitarian Bible Society, makes this comment: “Countless millions of the Lord’s people, from the dawn of the Christian era to the present day, have read these words in their Bibles precisely as they appear in our Authorised Version, but now this powerful testimony to the Godhead of our Saviour is to be swept out of the Scriptures and to disappear without trace.”

***Problem Number Two: Most modern versions use an undependable method of translation called dynamic equivalency.***

This translation method has become popular among Bible translators during the past 40 years. It is also called Idea translation, Impact translation, Functional Equivalence translation (as opposed to old tried and true Formal Equivalence method), and Common Language translation. The popular New International Version uses this methodology, as does the Today’s English Version, the Living Bible, the Contemporary English Version, and many others. This methodology is used almost exclusively by Wycliffe Bible Translators and the United Bible Societies. Consider some examples of how modern Bible translators change the Word of God through this undependable, subjective methodology:

- ◆ Isaiah 1:18—“Snow” (KJV) = “Coconut” (United Bible Societies translation)
- ◆ Matt. 8:20—“foxes” was translated “coyotes” in the Mazahua language of Mexico
- ◆ Mark 4:21—“on a candlestick” was translated “on a grain bin” in the Korku language of India
- ◆ In another Wycliffe translation “fig tree” was replaced with “banana tree”
- ◆ Rom. 3:25—“blood” (KJV) = “death” (TEV)

If the Bible student uses a dynamic equivalency Bible, he can never know which of the words are God’s and which are man’s. Serious Bible study becomes impossible.

We do not believe that men have the authority to change God’s Word. The

translator's job is not to modify the Bible; his job is to translate it accurately. It is then the job of the preacher and teacher to explain the Bible. When we study the Bible, we need an accurate Bible so that we know we are studying the words of God and not merely the words of man.

For more about the dependability of the King James Bible and its underlying Hebrew and Greek texts, we recommend the *Advanced Bible Studies Series* course "The Bible Version Issue."

# **Review Questions on First Two Sections**

- 1-3. What three things did the Bereans of Acts 17:11 do that made them noble?
- 4-5. What two words in 2 Timothy 2:15 tell us that Bible study requires labor?
- 6-7. What are two ways that the word “study” in 2 Timothy 2:15 is translated in other passages?
8. According to 2 Timothy 2:15, what will happen if the believer does not study the Bible properly?
- 9-11. What are three ways that false teachers misuse the Scripture?
12. In what verse did Peter warn about false teachers who wrested the Scripture?
13. What verse warns that “evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived”?
14. How can the problem of the antiquation of the King James Bible be overcome?
- 15-16. What are two serious errors pertaining to the modern versions?
17. In what verse does the New Testament say that one of the churches received Paul’s writings as the word of God?
18. Frederick Scrivener said that “the worst corruptions to which the New Testament has ever been subject, originated within a \_\_\_\_\_ years after it was composed.”
19. What was the location of an influential heretical school that arose after the apostles died?
- 20-21. Who were two heretics associated with this school?
22. What did these heretics do to some of the biblical manuscripts?
23. Frederick Nolan warned that “in some instances the genuine text had been wholly \_\_\_\_\_ by the spurious editions.”
- 24-25. What are two names for the modern critical Greek text?
26. How do we know that the Scriptures were preserved through the Dark Ages?

27. Why was the printed Greek text of the Reformation era called “the received text”?

28-32. The old confessions of faith said: “The Old Testament in Hebrew . . . and the New Testament in Greek . . . being immediately \_\_\_\_\_ by God, and by his singular \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ kept \_\_\_\_\_ in all ages, are therefore \_\_\_\_\_; so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them.”

33. What is the name of the critical Greek text that was published in 1881 to challenge the Received Text?

34-37. What are four verses in which the doctrine of Christ’s deity is weakened in the modern Bible versions?

38-39. What are two other names for dynamic equivalency?

40-41. What are two Bible translation organizations that use dynamic equivalency?

42-43. If the Bible student uses a dynamic equivalency Bible, he can never know which of the words are \_\_\_\_\_ and which are \_\_\_\_\_.

44-45. The translator’s job is not to \_\_\_\_\_ the Bible; his job is to translate it accurately. It is then the job of the preacher and teacher to \_\_\_\_\_ the Bible.

# SOME REQUIREMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE BIBLE STUDY

*“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” 2 Timothy 2:15*

**F**ollowing are some of the things that are necessary to understand the Scriptures.

**1. Effective Bible study requires SPIRITUAL LIFE** (1 Cor. 2:14 - 3:3). The first and foremost requirement for fruitful Bible study is a godly life.

There are three types of people described in 1 Corinthians chapters two and three: the *natural* man, the *spiritual* man, and the *carnal* man.

The natural or unsaved person is spiritually dead and blind (Eph. 2:1-3; 2 Cor. 4:4). He cannot understand the things of God. “The deepest biblical scholar, if he fails to find Christ, knows less of the real meaning of the Gospel than the humblest Christian who is living in the faith of the Son of God” (*Pulpit Commentary*). When the heart turns to the Lord, though, and receives Jesus Christ, the blindness is lifted (2 Cor. 3:14-17).

The spiritual man (1 Cor. 2:15-16) and the carnal man (1 Cor. 3:1-4) refer to believers. The believer is either spiritual or carnal depending on his walk with Christ, depending on whether he is walking in the flesh or the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-25). The carnal or worldly believer, because he is not walking in the Spirit, cannot understand the difficult things of Scripture. He can take milk but not meat. See also Hebrews 5:12-14. Thus, in Bible study spiritual life is more important than technical skills. “A person who understands the language of the Holy Spirit, but who does not understand a word of Greek or Hebrew or Aramaic, will get more out of the Bible than one who knows all about Greek and Hebrew but is not born again. It is a well-demonstrated fact that many plain men and women who possess no knowledge of the original languages in which the Bible was written have knowledge of the real contents of the Bible. Their understanding of its actual teaching and its depth, fullness, and beauty far surpasses that of many learned professors in theological faculties” (R.A. Torrey).



Proverbs 17:16 contains a serious warning: *“Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?”* If a person’s heart is not right with God, he cannot obtain wisdom regardless of how much money he spends and regardless of how much education he obtains.

Dear friends, if we want to study the Bible fruitfully, we must make certain that we are born again and that we are walking in close fellowship with the Author of the Book. This is the first and foremost requirement.

Studying the Bible is something like tuning in to a radio channel. Heaven is far away, but God broadcasts His glorious message to earth on a clear and powerful station with the call letters BIBLE. If the believer is in fellowship with Christ, he has an open channel to Heaven through the Scriptures. The closer the fellowship with Christ, the sharper the reception and the more plainly the Bible speaks. If, on the other hand, a believer walks in carnality and in fellowship with the world, the reception becomes poor, because the Holy Spirit is grieved (Eph. 4:30). The static of the things of this world hinders the reception of a spiritual broadcast. Child of God, don’t let unconfessed sin and worldliness rob you of the blessing of being tuned in to Heaven’s glorious channel!

**2. Effective Bible study requires FAITH** (Heb. 11:1, 6). The one who benefits from the study of the Scriptures must approach this important business by faith. Bible faith means confidence in God and His promises, and there are many things of which the Bible student must be confident.

- a. He must be confident that the Bible is God’s inspired, preserved Word and that he can depend upon its every utterance (1 Thess. 2:13).
- b. He must be confident that God loves him and wants him to understand the Bible. God gave the Bible to reveal truth, not to hide it (Deut. 29:29).
- c. He must be confident that the Holy Spirit will help him understand the Bible (1 John 2:27).

**3. Effective Bible study must have THE RIGHT GOALS.** To properly understand the Bible, one must have the right motive and objective.

- a. There are many wrong motives for studying the Bible.
  - (1) Some read the Bible merely to learn something new and curious, like the Athenians of old to whom Paul preached (Acts 17:21).

- (2) Some want to be entertained and have no intention to obey God, like those who heard Ezekiel (Eze. 33:31-32).
  - (3) Some read God's word simply to find errors and to seek an excuse for their unbelief, as did the Pharisees and Sadducees, scribes and lawyers when they vainly and foolishly attempted to catch Christ in some mistake (Lk. 20:40-47).
  - (4) Some show interest in the Bible only in the hope of gaining worldly advantage, such as those in poorer countries who think that Christianity is a ticket to the West or a way to make money. This is similar to the motive of the Jews who heard Christ because they hoped He would provide them with food and clothing and protect them from their enemies (Jn. 6:14-15). When they learned that Christ was not a ticket to worldly prosperity, they turned away from the Word of God (Jn. 6:66).
- b. Thus, we must be very careful that we come to the Word of God with the right motives, some of which are as follows:
- (1) The first proper objective of Bible study is to know the Lord. An example of this is Mary sitting at Jesus' feet to hear His word (Lk. 10:39). Her desire was to know Christ himself. That is how we must approach the Bible. God did not give us the Scriptures to entertain us but that we might know Him, as Adam and Eve did when they walked with God in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:8) and as Enoch did when he walked with God in an evil age (Gen. 5:24).
  - (2) Another proper goal and motive in Bible study is to know the Lord's will (Rom. 12), so that we might please Him in this life. The believer has the privilege of knowing the very mind of Christ for all aspects of his earthly walk.
  - (3) Another important objective of Bible study is to help others. According to Hebrews 5:12, it is God's will that every believer become a teacher of the Scriptures, not in the sense of leading a church but in the sense of helping others privately in our daily lives. Every Christian should be able to do what Philip did with the Ethiopian eunuch, when he started at Isaiah and preached Christ to him (Acts 8:30-35). The older women are to teach the younger ones (Titus 2:3-4), etc.

**4. Effective Bible study must have THE RIGHT PRIORITY.** God requires first place in our lives (Mat. 6:33); and since He has magnified His Word above His very name (Psa. 138:2), it is evident that He intends that we should make the study of His Word the very highest priority. Following are some of the ways that we can do this:

- a. The study of the Bible should come first in the day when we are still fresh and our minds are uncluttered with the concerns of life. Some have vowed to the Lord that they will not eat food until they have eaten God's Word. That is a noble and wise thing. For many years, I determined before the Lord that I would not read any other material until I had first read His Word. When I was engaged to my wife and she was still living in a foreign country and our only form of communication was by mail, I determined before the Lord that I would never read one of her letters until I had first spent my time studying His Word. I believe such things please the Lord, because they demonstrate our zeal toward spiritual matters.
- b. The study of the Bible should be given sufficient time. It is not honoring to God to apply a tiny amount of time to the study of His Word, or to read some little two-minute devotional in the place of serious Bible study.
- c. The study of the Bible should be a priority above the study of other books. It is not honoring to God to spend most of one's time reading *about* the Bible while neglecting the actual study of the Bible itself. While we do not despise the value of sound doctrinal books, they should never take the place of the Bible.

**5. Effective Bible study requires HUNGER FOR GOD AND HIS TRUTH** (Psa. 63:1). Job lived long ago and did not have all of the Scriptures as we do today, but he had a great hunger for God's words. He testified, "... *I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food*" (Job 23:12). Likewise, for a Christian to make Bible study the priority it must be, requires that he have a great hunger to know the Word of God. Be careful not to spoil your appetite! If you find that you have lost your appetite for the Bible and that it has become boring, you might be feeding on the wrong things in your life. The believer has both the flesh and the spirit, and if he feeds the flesh, he will be carnal and will lose his appetite for spiritual things (Gal. 5:16-25). It is like

eating candy and junk food and thus spoiling one's appetite for wholesome food. The solution to such a problem is to stop eating the junk and soon you regain a healthy appetite.

## **6. Effective Bible study requires CONCENTRATION**

If you can't concentrate upon the Bible, your study time will not be very profitable. It is so easy for the mind to wander as you read the Bible, and we must do whatever is necessary to keep our thoughts on the Scriptures, to hold the words of God in our hearts so that they bring forth good fruit. Not only do we live in a weak, fleshly body (called the "*body of this death*" in Romans 7:24) that gets tired and sick, and not only do we dwell in a world full of cares and troubles, but we have an aggressive spiritual enemy that seeks to hinder our progress. His name is Satan, meaning *the adversary*, the one who stands before us to resist us. Bible study is spiritual warfare, and we must do everything necessary to win this war.

The Parable of the Sower teaches us that a man must make the effort to understand and apply the Scriptures, or the truth will be stolen away from his heart by the Devil (Mat. 13:19). We must capture the truth by meditating on it and finding out its meaning.

This is why MEMORIZATION of Scripture is so important. When Scriptures are memorized, the believer can then meditate upon them at any time. It is good to write Scripture verses down on cards and keep them with you so that you can spend time memorizing Scripture as you have opportunity, such as when you are waiting on someone or something. Redeem the time!

Following are some suggestions to help you concentrate upon the Word of God:

- a. A quiet, private place is required. I have seen Christians trying to study the Bible in a room where other people are talking and a radio is blaring, etc. That is not wise and it is not honoring to the Lord who deserves our undivided attention. The Bible is the very Word of God. Would it be proper to invite God over for a visit and then have many other things going on at the same time as He was talking to us? On some occasions when I have visited people in their homes to talk to them about spiritual matters, they have kept the television on and have continued watching it. That was very disrespectful to the message that I was bringing from God's Word. There have been

occasions when I have gotten into my car and driven out to a country road or, if in a city, to the backside of the parking lot of a large shopping area in order to have a quiet and private place for Bible study.

- b. Ask the Lord to help you to keep your mind on His Word. If you find your mind frequently wandering during Bible study, lay the matter before the Lord. Tell Him that you desire to grow in knowledge of Him and His Word, explain your problem to Him, and beseech Him to help you concentrate.
- c. If you are particularly worried about some matter, cast it upon the Lord (1 Pet. 5:7) and trust Him to take care of it for you; then turn your full attention to His Word.
- d. Have pen in hand as you read. Just the action of picking up one's pen and being ready to write things down or to mark in one's Bible causes the mind to focus more on the reading.
- e. Remove things from your Bible study area that are distracting. I know a pastor who removed all of the bright colored covers from the books in his office, because they distracted him when he was trying to study the Bible.
- f. Be careful about using a computer during Bible reading time. I use my computer to study the Bible, because it is so efficient, but I do not use my computer when I have my daily devotional time in the Scriptures. It is too easy to get distracted with other things on the computer.
- g. Be careful about extraneous thoughts. When you are studying the Bible, it will often happen that thoughts about other things will rush in and you will be tempted to leave the study of the Bible and to rush off to take care of those things. For this reason, it is a good idea to have pen and paper handy and to jot down such thoughts so that you can take care of them later. This way, you can put them out of your mind for the time being and proceed with your study. If you get in the habit of allowing yourself to rush off and take care of other things, you will be crippled in your ability to study the Bible fruitfully.
- h. Go back and read the passage again. When you find that your mind

has wandered during the reading of the Scripture, it is important to go back and read that passage again until you understand what you are reading, even if it takes several readings. It is better to read one verse with clear understanding than to read an entire chapter with the mind drifting to other things.

- i. Try not to read the Bible when you are tired. Sometimes this cannot be avoided, and it is better to read the Bible when you are tired than not at all. But the wise Bible student will arrange his schedule in such a way that he can study the Scriptures when his mind is fresh.
- j. If you find your mind wandering, it might help to put the Bible reading first before you do anything else in the day. I have found that if I start reading and studying other things first, it is much more difficult to concentrate on the Bible later.
- k. Sometimes it is helpful to read the Bible aloud if you find your mind wandering. This can help you maintain your concentration.
- l. A larger print Bible can also help with concentration because it is easier to read and the pages of the Bible are not as cluttered.
- m. Be persistent. Don't let the Devil defeat you in your Bible reading. If you find yourself unable to concentrate for a period, don't quit. There are ups and downs in Bible study as there are in everything else in life. The best tip for effective Bible study is to keep on keeping on!

**7. Effective Bible study REQUIRES HARD WORK** (Prov. 2:1-5). God likens the search for wisdom in His Word to the search for silver. Men do not ordinarily find silver lying on the ground in easily accessible places. It is more commonly found in the precipitous mountains, deep in the solid rock, so that it must be obtained through very strenuous labor. Likewise, while there are treasures everywhere one looks in the Scripture and some of the treasures can be found through even the most casual reading; much labor is required to draw out its best treasures. "Most great truths do not lie on the surface. They must be brought up into the light by patient toil" (Frank Charles Thompson). A lazy person will never understand God's Word very well. To rightly divide the Word of God requires that we become a workman (2 Tim. 2:15). It is one thing to own concordances and commentaries; it is another thing to USE them! You must apply great diligence in this endeavor. Many are seeking some "secret key" that

opens up the Bible; but while there are many important keys and rules of interpretation, as we will demonstrate in this course, there is no “secret key” that bypasses the requirement of hard work. There are no shortcuts for the lazy person.

**8. Effective Bible study requires PRAYER** (Psa. 119:18; Prov. 2:3; Eph. 1:17-18). As we search the Bible, we must cry out to its Author for understanding. The Bible student must trust the Lord and “*lean not unto thine own understanding*” (Prov. 3:5-6). R. A. Torrey said, “Prayer will do more than a college education to make the Bible an open and glorious book.” Charles Bridges warned: “Without this spirit of prayer there may be attention and earnestness; yet not one spiritual impression upon the conscience; not one ray of Divine light in the soul. Earthly wisdom is gained by study; heavenly wisdom by prayer. Study may form a Biblical scholar; prayer puts the heart under a heavenly tutorage, and therefore forms the wise and spiritual Christian. ... God keeps the key of the treasure-house in his own hand. ... We look for no other inspiration than Divine grace to make his word clear and impressive” (Bridges). When we pray for wisdom we acknowledge that we don’t have it; we acknowledge our dependency upon God; we are humbling ourselves. Earnest prayer to understand the Bible is the opposite of the spirit of pride of scholarship and the foolish dependency upon human intellect, and helps keep the heart humble and right. Twice the Scripture warns that God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). As the Bible student grows in his understanding of the Scriptures and has success in applying the rules of interpretation, he is ever in danger of becoming self confident and lackadaisical. The old heart can deceive me into thinking that I have “arrived” and that I no longer need to cry out to the Lord for understanding. One way to resist this is to remind myself of what I don’t understand in the Word of God rather than focus on what I do understand. No man will ever truly master the Scriptures. The Bible, as God’s Word, is an eternal book containing endless truth. A man could study any one book of the Bible for his entire life, studying it diligently every day, and never completely master even that one portion of Scripture. As you grow in understanding the Bible you realize that your knowledge is only superficial, that there is much that still lies beyond your grasp. Thus we never come to the place in our Bible study whereby we do not need to cry out to the Author for help and understanding.

**9. Effective Bible study requires PATIENCE and PERSISTENCE** (Jn.

8:31; Col. 1:23; 1 Tim. 4:16). *“It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter”* (Prov. 25:2). The Bible is the Word of the eternal God, and it is not possible that we will understand all of it in a short time. It is designed to be the Book of a man’s life, his entire life, and no man will ever exhaust its treasures. A few years ago I finally found the meaning of one of the Proverbs that I have been studying for 23 years. Another time I found the answer to something in the Bible that had puzzled me for 29 years. Study your Bible with patience. The fruit is there for the one who just keeps on keeping on, plodding along in his study, day by day, year by year, onward, forward, with patience. *“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience”* (Luke 8:15).

Persistence is essential in the Christian life. Feelings come and go. The child of God must continue in the things of Christ whether he feels like it or not, whether the situation is difficult or easy. Certainly this is true for Bible study. There will be periods in which your heart will sing and the meaning of the Scripture will literally leap off the pages of the Bible and it will come alive. There will be other times in which everything is dull and dry, even the very study of God’s word. We must remember that we live in a *“body of this death”* (Rom. 7:24) and we are much affected by our physical condition. I remember a pastor friend who had kidney failure. Before his illness, he had a vibrant Christian life. He would memorize entire books of the Bible and the Scriptures were his delight. After his illness, he testified to me that though he continued to read the Bible, it only mocked him. David spoke of such a condition in Psalm 119:83. *“For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes.”* David was saying that he felt all dried up like a leather bottle that was left over a fire. The child of God will go through times like that experientially, and he must do what David did, *“yet do I not forget thy statutes.”* Even if Bible study becomes monotonous and discouraging, just keep on keeping on and the blessing will return. One preacher wisely said, “Read the Bible when you feel like it, and when you don’t feel like reading it, read it until you do.”

**10. Effective Bible study requires PAYING ATTENTION TO THE DETAILS** (Mat. 4:4). To benefit the most from Bible study, one must understand that every word of the Bible is important. In fact, the Lord Jesus Christ spoke even of the jots and tittles, which are tiny parts of Hebrew letters (Mat. 5:18). The wise Bible student pores over the pages of Scripture looking at



every detail, knowing that nothing is there by accident. Every word of Scripture has a divine purpose. It was purified seven times (Psalm 12:6). Thus, it is imperative that the student have an accurately translated Bible that brings out the details of the Hebrew and Greek. “Andrew Bonar tells of a simple Christian in a farmhouse who had meditated the Bible through three times. This is precisely what this Psalmist had done, -- he had gone past reading into meditation. Like Luther, David had shaken every fruit tree in God's garden, and gathered golden fruit therefrom. ‘The most,’ says Martin Boos, ‘read their Bibles like cows that stand in the thick grass, and trample under their feet the finest flowers and herbs.’ It is to be feared that we too often do the like. This is a miserable way of treating the pages of inspiration. May the Lord prevent us from repeating that sin while reading this priceless Psalm” (C.H. Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*).

**11. Effective Bible study requires OBEDIENCE** (Lk. 11:28; Jn. 7:17; 8:31-32; Heb. 5:14; Jam. 1:22-27). The Bible is not given for entertainment; it is given that we might know and do the will of God. The person who has no intention to obey God will never understand the Bible properly. Peter gave two requirements for learning God's Word in 1 Peter 2:1-2. First we must lay aside sinful things (1 Pet. 2:1), then we must drink in the Scriptures (1 Pet. 2:2). If I study the Bible but do not obey it and lay aside sinful things I will not benefit from the study. A Christian who is worldly and spiritually careless, who is unfaithful to the house of God, who is not busy in the service of the Lord, will not have a strong understanding of biblical truth. Such a one is also vulnerable to the wiles of false teachers, who “*by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*” (Romans 16:18). “It is remarkable how clear, simple, and beautiful passages that once puzzled us become when we are brought to that place where we say to God, ‘I surrender my will unconditionally to Yours. I have no will but Yours. Teach me Your will.’ A surrendered will does more to make the Bible an open book than a university education. It is simply impossible to get the largest profit out of your Bible study until you surrender your will to God” (Torrey).

For this reason we must apply the Bible study to our daily lives. Don't read and study the Bible as a mere intellectual exercise. Continually ask the Lord to show you how it can be applied to your life. The Bible should be profitable “*for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*” (2 Tim. 3:16). It should produce *patience, comfort, hope* (Rom. 15:4). It should admonish us not to sin (1

Cor. 10:11).

**12. Effective Bible study requires CONFESSION OF SIN** (Psa. 66:18; Pr. 28:9). As we have seen, the carnal believer cannot understand the deep things of God. How does the believer deal with the sin problem in his life? By repentance and confession (1 John 1:5-10). Thus it is crucial that the believer confess his sins so that he can grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Word of God.

**13. Effective Bible study requires HUMILITY** (James 4:6; Mat. 18:3). The proud person will not learn anything from the Lord. God requires child-like humility. The believer must submit himself to God and accept that which God has spoken, not trying to search beyond the Scriptures to find out things that are still hidden (Deut. 29:29), not haughtily thinking that he can fully understand all of the things of God and rejecting those things that he cannot understand. There are many things in Scripture that are exceedingly difficult to understand, such as the deity and humanity of Christ and the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. It should not surprise us that we are unable to fully understand such things in this present fallen world, and living, as we do, in the weak flesh. The proud person, though, demands that he understand everything in the Bible and that every seeming difficulty be explained, or he refuses to believe it. The proud person comes to the Bible merely to find confirmation of his own opinions, and he rejects that which does not suit his own thinking. The humble man, on the other hand, simply believes everything God says. In Mark 9:31, Christ told his disciples that he would be killed and would rise the third day. Verse 32 says they did not understand his saying. Why not? The words were plain enough. They didn't understand because they had other ideas about what Christ would do and they could not therefore receive the plain word of God. "What will a pious, obedient, loving child do when he hears the father make a remark which on the surface appears objectionable? Instead of criticizing him and condemning his utterance as wrong, the child will ask him for an explanation. If we find stumbling blocks in the Holy Scriptures, let us take the attitude of such a loving child" (William Arndt).

**14. Effective Bible study requires both READING** (Deut. 17:18-19; Rev. 1:3) **AND STUDYING** (2 Tim. 2:15). Reading and studying are two different things. It is necessary, first, simply to **READ** the Bible. There is probably no other one thing that can help a believer better understand the Bible than simply reading it and reading it and reading it. If you learn nothing else from this

course, I challenge you to make the reading of the Scriptures a big part of your Christian life. My mother started reading the Bible through twice a year when she was about 77 years old, and every time I have seen her since then she has told me how that she has grown in her understanding by this means. It is necessary, also, to **STUDY** the Bible. This involves slowing down the pace, doing word studies, analyzing individual passages, doing topical studies, outlining books, using commentaries, etc. This is the point where we begin to use Bible study tools.

*SOME TIPS ON READING THE BIBLE:*

- a. Read it systematically. That means read it all of the way through. Why should the Bible be read systematically? The Bible is not merely a series of writings; it is one Book; and to be understood it needs to be read and studied as one Book. Each individual book of the Bible complements the other books, and as the Bible is read systematically the pieces gradually fit together.

I supposed I knew my Bible,  
    Reading piecemeal, hit or miss,  
Now a bit of John or Matthew,  
    Now a snatch of Genesis,  
Certain chapters of Isaiah,  
    Certain Psalms (the twenty-third)  
Twelfth of Romans, First of Proverbs--  
    Yes, I thought I knew the Word!  
But I found that thorough reading  
    Was a different thing to do,  
And the way was unfamiliar  
    When I read the Bible through.  
You who like to play at Bible,  
    Dip and dabble, here and there.  
Just before you kneel aweary,  
    And yawn through a hurried prayer;  
You who treat the Crown of Writings  
    As you treat no other book--  
Just a paragraph disjointed,

Just a crude impatient look--  
Try a worthier procedure  
Try a broad and steady view;  
You will kneel in very rapture  
When you read the Bible through!  
-- Amos R. Wells

“Such as read the Bible by fits upon rainy days, not eating the book with John [Rev. 10:9-10], but tasting only with the tip of the tongue: such as meditate by snatches, never chewing the cud and digesting their meat, they may happily [haply, i.e. by chance] get a smacking for discourse and table talk; but not enough to keep soul and life together, much less for strength and vigour” (Samuel Ward, 1615, cited from David Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 552).

- (1) It is good to divide your reading time between the Old and New Testaments. If we read continually in the Old Testament without also reading some in the New we can forget that we no longer live under the Mosaic Law and that it was given only to lead us to Christ, and the Law can actually hinder rather than strengthen the spiritual life if it is used improperly. Always be careful to look at the Old Testament through the eyes of the New. It can be helpful, though it certainly should not be made into a hard and fast rule, to read the New Testament at least twice as much as the Old. There are many ways to divide your time between the Testaments, and we will give some suggestions under the next point.
- (2) It is good to have a Bible reading plan. By reading three and a quarter chapters a day one can read through the Bible in a year. By reading one chapter a day one can read the Bible through in three years and three months. Following are some suggested Bible reading plans:
  - (a) By the following the 52-Week Bible Reading Plan you will read the Old Testament once and the New Testament twice in a year:

Week	27 -- 1 Kings
1 -- Genesis 1-26	28 -- 2 Kings
2 -- Genesis 27-50	29 -- Psalms 51-100
3 -- Matthew	30 -- 1 Chronicles
4 -- Mark	31 -- 2 Chronicles
5 -- Exodus 1-21	32 -- Psalms 101-150
6 -- Exodus 22-40	33 -- Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
7 -- Luke	34 -- Proverbs
8 -- John	35 -- Matthew
9 -- Leviticus	36 -- Isaiah 1-35
10 -- Acts	37 -- Isaiah 36-66
11 -- Numbers 1-18	38 -- Mark
12 -- Numbers 19-36	39 -- Luke
13 -- Romans, Galatians	40 -- Jeremiah 1-29
14 -- 1 and 2 Corinthians	41 -- Jeremiah 30-52, Lamentations
15 -- Deuteronomy 1-17	42 -- John
16 -- Deuteronomy 17-34	43 -- Acts
17 -- Ephesians to Philemon	44 -- Ezekiel 1-24
18 -- Hebrews to 2 Peter	45 -- Ezekiel 25-48
19 -- Joshua	46 -- Romans, Galatians
20 -- 1 John to Revelation	47 -- 1 and 2 Corinthians
21 -- Judges, Ruth	48 -- Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos
22 -- Job 1-31	49 -- Ephesians to Philemon
23 -- Job 32-42, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon	50 -- Obadiah to Malachi
24 -- 1 Samuel	51 -- Hebrews to 2 Peter
25 -- 2 Samuel	52 -- 1 John to Revelation
26 -- Psalms 1-50	

(b) The Perpetual Bible Reading Schedule is a system whereby you read one portion from four different parts of the Bible each day: Historical (Genesis - 2 Kings), Devotional (1 Chronicles - Song of Solomon), Prophetical (Isaiah - Malachi), and Doctrinal (New Testament). The average

amount read each day in this plan is less than four chapters. It is available on the web at <http://rejoicing.com/bread.html>.

- (c) The Good Book Company Bible Reading Plan also uses a Bible portion from four parts of the Bible, the history and prophets of the O.T., the wisdom books of the O.T., the N.T. Gospels, and the N.T. Epistles. This is also available on the web at <http://www.thegoodbookcompany.com/biblereadjan.htm>.
- (d) Back to the Bible has five different Bible Reading plans: reading the Bible by the Chronological order of the books; reading the Bible by the Historical order of the books; reading the Old and New Testament together; reading from beginning to end of the Bible; and a blended plan which is a combination of the others. These can be found at <http://www.backtothebible.org/index.php/Bible-Reading-Guides.html>.
- (e) Place a bookmark in the Bible at three places: Genesis, Job, and Matthew. By reading one chapter from each of these sections every day, you will read the Old Testament once and the New Testament twice in about eighteen months.
- (f) Read three chapters every weekday and five chapters on Sundays, and you will read the entire Bible in less than a year.
- (g) My favorite is the Blue Letter Bible reading plan whereby you read from the New Testament and the Old Testament each day. It can be found at <http://cf.blueletterbible.org/reader/daily/more.cfm?planID=6>

b. Read an individual book of the Bible repeatedly until the theme and meaning become clear. Well-known Bible commentator G. Campbell Morgan read a book of the Bible 50 times before commenting. Evangelist R.A. Torrey advocated reading a book 12 times. Dr. Bruce Lackey advocated reading it 10 times. The exact number of times is not the essential thing; what is essential is that you read the book or passage enough so that its meaning becomes clear and its individual parts begin to fit together and make sense.

c. Keep a pocket Bible or New Testament handy so that you can make the most of any extra time during the day by reading a portion of

Scripture. So much time is wasted that could be better spent. One well-known secular author read an entire large multi-volume history of Britain during the minutes he had to wait each day for his meal to be brought to the table.

d. One can also have some of the benefits of reading the Bible by listening to it on cassette or CD in the car or at home or elsewhere, but this should not take the place of a quiet time before God.

e. Divide your Bible study time into two parts: the first part just for reading and the last part for studying. It doesn't take very long to read the four chapters required for one to read the N.T. through twice in a year and the O.T. once.

(1) You can do your reading and studying at one sitting.

(2) Or you can divide them into two separate times during the day.

(3) You can also focus on reading during the first part of the year, while focusing on study the second part of the year. For example, during the first part of the year you could read 7 chapters a day and thus read the Bible all the way through in five and a half months (the Bible contains 1189 chapters). That would leave six and a half months in the year for the study of the Bible.

f. Divide your Bible reading into morning and evening portions (Psalm 119:147-148). A good habit to develop is to read a portion of Scripture in the morning and in the evening. Following are some suggestions:

(1) Read a portion of the Old Testament in the morning and a portion of the New Testament in the evening.

(2) Read the Scriptures systematically in the morning, three or four chapters a day, and then read more devotionally in the evening, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead to various passages.

(3) Read systematically in the morning and then read in the Psalms and Proverbs in the evenings.

**15. Effective Bible study requires the help of A GOOD CHURCH.** *“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth”* (1 Tim. 3:15). *“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”* (Ephesians 4:11,12). *“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation”* (Hebrews 13:7). The church is the institution God has ordained to be the pillar and ground of the truth. It is to that institution to which He has given ministry-gifted men for the edification of the saints, and it is necessary for the child of God to benefit from this ministry. It is not God’s will for a Christian to be a “lone maverick.” The biblical pattern is for a Christian to join himself to a sound Bible-believing church. That is emphasized throughout the New Testament. It is particularly in the church that the Christian is to hear the Word of God. Seven times in Revelation chapters two and three we read that we are to *“hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”* (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). We believe there is a special sense in which God speaks to the believer in his own assembly through his own pastors. As the Lord had a special message for each of the churches of Asia Minor in the first century, He has a special message for each church today. Each church is a body (1 Cor. 12:27), and the members are to be taught and edified together by the Lord through the pastors and teachers. In addition to this the Christian can avail himself of sound teaching through books and tapes. He should take advantage of every avenue of sound teaching available to him, but the first place for sound teaching is in one’s own church, assuming, of course, that the church is a good one. When I was a new Christian, I didn’t know where to go to church at first. I was led to Christ by a Christian man while I was traveling, and the day after I was converted he continued on his journey and I went back to my home town. I started visiting various churches and praying about which one to join. I also obtained some books by various false teachers that confused me. One was by a Seventh-day Adventist. Others were by Pentecostals. Soon the Lord led me to a little fundamental Baptist church in Bartow, Florida, and the pastor and mature Christians there were exceedingly helpful to me and assisted me to become grounded in the truth.

Don’t waste the precious opportunity of learning from your church. So many Christians are so incredibly careless about the preaching and teaching they sit under. Many are not faithful to all of the services, and many of those who are



faithful hardly look at their Bibles, never taking notes, and making no effort to capture something that will benefit them later. They don't come prepared with paper and pen. Don't follow this unwise example. Use every opportunity of sitting under good preaching and teaching to capture as much as possible for your spiritual life and ministry. Even dull preachers and teachers usually have something worthwhile to say, if the student will make the effort to get it. Come prepared to capture the things the Lord shows you during the preaching and teaching. Don't come complaining; come praying, beseeching the Lord to speak through the preaching. Come with pen and paper. Come with a Bible that has a margin wide enough to jot things down. Come with pencil or colored pens to mark your Bible. Underline important things. Jot down cross-references that you find during the teaching. Jot down definitions of words. Jot down good outlines that you can use later. Jot down good thoughts and helpful sayings. (We will deal with this under the next section on "Marking Your Bible.") As you sit under preaching in an expectant manner, earnestly seeking something from the Lord, you will find that many thoughts come to you and that the Lord will give you many things. Don't let these slip away. Jot them down in a notebook. I am thankful for the godly example of a Christian friend the Lord gave me when I was first saved. His name is Richard Tedder, and he was saved only a short while before I was, but he had become a diligent Bible student and had grown spiritually. Richard was one of the members of the first church I joined after I was saved, and he befriended me and was a great help in my early Christian life. One thing I learned from Richard, and I don't know if he even knows this, was to have a proper study Bible with me when I came to church and to take notes during the preaching. His wise example in this matter got me off to a strong start in my Christian life and helped establish me in the path down which I have gone in my ministry.

**16. MEMORIZE THE BOOKS of the Bible.** A good starting point for effective Bible study is to memorize the names and order of the 66 books of the Bible. This will greatly help you as you search the Scriptures, run cross-references, use a concordance, and look up passages during the preaching services.

**17. DON'T GET STUCK IN A RUT.** There are few binding laws of Bible reading and study that God has given us. Each believer is at liberty to follow the Holy Spirit's lead and to try different things. If you find yourself bored with your Bible study, it might be time to try something different.

# **Review Questions on Requirements for Effective Bible Study**

- 1-3. What are three types of men described in 1 Corinthians 2-3?
2. Why is it that the natural man cannot understand the Bible?
3. What verse says that the unsaved person is dead in trespasses and sins?
4. What book and chapter describes the difference between walking in the Spirit and walking in the flesh?
5. What book and chapter says that when man turns to God from his heart that the veil is lifted from his eyes?
6. What book and chapter says the baby Christian is unskillful in the word of righteousness?
7. In Bible study \_\_\_\_\_ life is more important in Bible study than technical skills.
8. Why can the carnal Christian only understand simple things in the Bible?
9. What verse says the believer can grieve the Holy Spirit?
10. What verse says that without faith it is impossible to please God?
- 11-13. What are three wrong motives for studying the Bible?
14. In what book and chapter of the Bible did most of Christ's followers turn away from Him?
15. What book and chapter tell us how to know the perfect will of God?
16. What book and chapter says every believer should be a teacher?
17. What verse says to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness?
- 18-19. What are two ways you can put the Bible first in your life?
20. What Bible character said, "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food"?
21. What is the reason why the Bible becomes boring?
- 22-23. In what parable and in what book and chapter did Jesus warn that if someone does not make the effort to understand the Scripture that the Devil catches it away?

- 24-28. What are five of the things you can do to keep your concentration on the Bible?
29. In what book and chapter is the search for wisdom in God's Word likened to the search for silver?
30. R. A. Torrey said, "\_\_\_\_\_ will do more than a college education to make the Bible an open and glorious book."
31. In what verse did Jesus say that those who are His disciples indeed continue in His Word?
32. What did David mean in Psalm 119:83 when he said he was like a bottle in the smoke?
33. One preacher wisely said, "Read the Bible when you \_\_\_\_\_ like it, and when you don't \_\_\_\_\_ like reading it, read it until you do."
34. In Matthew 4:4 Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every \_\_\_\_\_ that proceedeth out of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God."
35. In what verse did Jesus say, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it"?
36. In what verse did Jesus say, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself"?
37. In what book and chapter is the study of the Bible likened to someone who sees his face in the mirror?
- 38-39. 1 Peter 2:1-2 lists what two things that are necessary for learning the Bible?
- 40-42. What are three things that the Bible should do, according to 2 Timothy 3:16?
43. What verse says that if we confess our sin God is faithful and just to forgive our sins?
44. The Bible warns that "God resisteth the \_\_\_\_\_, but giveth grace unto the humble."
- 45-46. Effective Bible study requires both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- 47-48. What two things was the king of Israel required to do with the Law of God in Deuteronomy 17?
49. Why should the Bible be read systematically?

50. To read through the Bible in a year, how many chapters do you have to read per day?
51. What verse says the church is the pillar and ground of the truth?
52. How many times in Revelation 2-3 is the statement “hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” repeated?

# MARKING YOUR BIBLE

**M**any people have asked me what study Bible I recommend, and my answer is that I recommend that they set out to make their own. Though I appreciate the value of good study Bibles, and I have benefited from them personally, it is also beneficial to make your own notes. For the first 15 or so years of my Christian life I used various study Bibles, then about 20 years ago I changed over to wide margin Bibles without notes. The first was an Oxford, then I had a Cambridge, but currently I am using a wide margin published by World. It has cross-references but no notes, and it has a wide margin at the top, bottom, and on both sides of the text. I have used these margins to add extensive cross-references, word definitions, outlines, and brief commentaries. It is my own unique study Bible.

Fruitful Bible study requires writing down the lessons that you learn. The student should therefore use a wide margin Bible and also keep a notebook handy. Special applications and meanings that come to the Bible student one day have a strange way of disappearing from the memory if they are not jotted down. It is not true that we can recall these thoughts simply by re-reading the particular verse(s) in question or by simple exercise of the will. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones gave this tip: "... if a verse stands out and hits you and arrests you, do not go on reading. Stop immediately and listen to it. It is speaking to you, so listen to it and speak to it. Stop reading at once, and work on this statement that has struck you in this way. ... The danger at that point I had to discover is to say to oneself, 'Ah yes, that is good, I will remember that,' and then to go on with the reading. Then you find yourself later saying, '... Now what was that that I was reading the other day?' Oh yes, it was this verse in that chapter. You then turn back to it and find to your dismay that it says nothing at all to you; you cannot recapture the message. That is why I say that whenever anything strikes you you must stop immediately and ... [put] it down on paper" (D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, p. 173).

## ***Some Tips on Marking Your Bible***

### ***1. Underline Judiciously***

It is your Bible and you can do as you please, but let me recommend that you

not just underline anything and everything indiscriminately. If you do that, your Bible will soon be a bewildering and almost indecipherable hodgepodge of underlines and marks. It is better to use some careful thought in underlining. Let me make some suggestions.

- a. Underline things that will help you see at a glance the divisions of a passage. In Genesis 1, I have underlined “the evening and the morning” because these mark the days of creation. (In Revelation 2-3 I have marked the names of the seven churches, thus I can see at a glance the division of that section.)
- b. Underline the most important things. In Genesis 1, I underlined verse 27.
- c. Underline repeated thoughts. In Genesis 1, I marked things such as “God said” and “after his kind.” (In Ecclesiastes I underlined every mention of “under the sun.” In Ezekiel I underlined “they shall know that I am the Lord.”)

## **2. Write Notes in Your Bible with Caution**

As with underlining, if you write down anything and everything in your Bible, you will soon find that the notes are almost useless. I advise using a pencil rather than a pen, because you can erase pencil markings. A mechanical pencil is very helpful, because it doesn't have to be sharpened. I suggest keeping two or three of them in your Bible case so that if one runs out of lead during the preaching, you can switch to another without a lot of fumbling around which distracts others. When writing things down that a preacher or teacher states, consider the source. Is that person a diligent student whose sayings are probably going to be accurate? If not, be very cautious about writing something down in your Bible. I have heard preachers and teachers say many things that were not accurate. Save the margins of your Bible for things that are special and that are doubtless true and accurate. Other things can be written down in a notebook.

### *THINGS TO WRITE IN THE MARGIN OF YOUR BIBLE*

- a. DEFINITIONS OF WORDS AND NAMES. As you learn the definitions of difficult words and doctrinal terms and names of people and places, jot them down in the margin of your Bible so you won't forget them. I have written hundreds of definitions in my Bible. The following are some examples:

Romans 2:23 -- sacrilege=profane  
Romans 3:20 -- justified = declared righteous  
Romans 3:24 -- redeem=bought with a price  
Romans 3:25 -- propitiation=satisfaction of a debt

- b. CROSS REFERENCES. No single cross reference system is exhaustive. Not even the *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* has every possible cross-reference. You will find many new cross-references to add to your Bible if you are diligent in study. For example, Matthew 6:23 should be cross-referenced to Proverbs 28:22, but it is not in any cross-reference system I have seen. And Ephesians 1:3 “spiritual blessings in heavenly places” should be cross-referenced with Colossians 3:1-3 and 1 Peter 1:4, but none of these are in the *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*.
- c. DOCTRINAL AND TEACHING OUTLINES. I can preach many sermons right from the margins of my Bible. For example, in Genesis 13, I have the four steps of “Lot’s Downward Slide”; in Proverbs 23, an outline on drunkenness; in Luke 16, an outline on Hell; in Acts 2, an outline on baptism; in Romans 1, an outline on homosexuality; in Romans 3, an outline on man’s nature.
- d. ANNOTATIONS SUCH AS WEIGHTS AND MEASURES. For example, in Exodus 25-27 I have noted the dimensions and weights of the various articles in the tabernacle.
- e. BRIEF COMMENTARY ON THE TEXT. When you learn something that is helpful about a passage, note it briefly in the margin. Every time you read that passage, the note will be there as a reminder. For example, in Luke 16:8 I have jotted down a couple of thoughts about how the children of this generation are wiser than the children of light. “How wiser? 1. In preparing for the future. 2. In the use of money. Christ is using the temporal to illustrate the eternal.” In Romans 3:31 I wrote, “Paul established the law for the purpose for which it was given. Compare vv. 19-22.”
- f. EXPLANATIONS OF TERMS PERTAINING TO BIBLE TIMES AND CULTURE. For example, at Isaiah 28:22 I have written, “consumption is trans. ‘riddance’ in Zeph. 1:18 and ‘consume’ in Ezek. 13:13.”

g. THINGS TO HELP YOU TEACH OTHERS. I recall an occasion when I was a young Christian and I unknowingly visited the home of a Jehovah's Witness woman who was zealous for her religion. I was invited into the house and I found myself in the midst of a group of people who were there for a JW Bible study. She took control of the situation and asked me if I believed Christians go to Heaven when they die, and I replied in the affirmative. She then asked me to show her and her friends where the Bible *specifically* says that the believer goes to Heaven or that he has a home in Heaven. I searched for a few minutes and couldn't find a passage that said exactly that and thus I was publicly put to shame before this false teacher. After that, I renewed my effort to be ready at all times to give an answer to the many heretics that are out there. One way I have done this is to write relevant things in the margin of my Bible so that I can find them quickly when the occasion presents itself. Thus, in many disputed verses I have noted the arguments against false teaching.

- (1) At Acts 2:38, for instance, I have annotated the reasons why we know this is not referring to baptismal regeneration: "The word 'for' can mean 'because of' or 'in order to' depending on the context (Lk. 5:13-14); baptism is not the gospel (1 Cor. 1:17); Peter himself later said baptism is a figure (1 Pet. 3:21); the Holy Spirit is received by trusting Christ (Eph. 1:12-13)."
- (2) In Exodus 20, I have noted the reasons why we know that the sabbath is not binding on N.T. Christians.
- (3) At Matthew 16:18 I have noted why the rock refers to Christ and not Peter.
- (4) At Mark 1:23 I have jotted down some of the key errors in the modern versions.
- (5) At Mark 9 I have listed briefly the various Bible descriptions of Hell and the passages in which Christ preached on Hell.
- (6) At John 3:5, I have written down the reasons why "born of water" is not speaking of baptism.
- (7) At John 13 I have noted why I believe footwashing is not a church ordinance.



These are a few examples. I used to preach in a county jail, and I used these notes almost every week when the prisoners would ask questions. If they asked a question that I did not know the answer to, I would get the answer and put it in my Bible (if I felt there was a possibility that I would forget it), so I would have it the next time that question came up.

- h. DIVISIONS OF A PASSAGE. Some study Bibles do some of this for you, but I have enjoyed doing it myself.

(1) For example, in Exodus 7-11, I have marked the 10 judgments on Egypt.

(2) In Exodus 20, I marked each of the 10 commandments.

(3) In Leviticus 1-7 I marked the various offerings.

- i. LEADING THOUGHTS AND IMPORTANT REPETITIONS.

(1) For example, in Paul's Epistles I have bracketed all of his prayers, beginning at Romans 1:8-10, and I have annotated the prayer that precedes and follows. In the margin of Romans 1:8-10, I put Romans 15:5-6, for that is Paul's next prayer. In the margin of Romans 15:5-6, I put Romans 1:8-10, for that is the preceding prayer, and Romans 15:3, for that is the next prayer.

(2) In Genesis I bracketed every occasion in which God repeated his covenant to Abraham, beginning in Genesis 12. I also added an asterisk so I can find each reference more easily.

In Acts 2 in my Bible, I currently have 27 separate notes with about 44 cross references, as follows:

Acts 2:1

Pentecost was on Sunday (Lev. 23:16)

Pentecost was a sign to Israel (1 Cor. 14:22)

2:6

The miracle was in the speaking not in the hearing

2:12

What meaneth this? the answer is in 1 Cor. 14:20-22

2:15

9 a.m.

2:16

The last days started with the apostles and include events of Revelation (1 Jn. 2:18)

2:17

Joel 2:28-32

2:21

Day of the Lord includes entire events of the tribulation (2 Pet. 3:10; 2 Thess. 5:2-3)

2:22

See Jn. 5:36; 6:14; 7:31; 10:37-38; 14:10-11; 15:24; 20:30-31  
Christ's miracles, see note at Jn. 20:30

2:25

"seeing this before" Ps. 16:8-11

2:34

Ps. 110:1

2:35

Christ will return 3:20-21

2:38

"for" can mean because of or in order to, depending on the context (Lk. 5:13-14)

Baptism is not the gospel (1 Cor. 1:17)

Peter himself later said baptism is a "figure" (1 Pet. 3:21)

Other passages in Acts say salvation is by believing in Christ (8:36-37; 10:43-48; 13:39; 15:11; 16:30-31; 20:21)

The Holy Spirit is received by trusting Christ (Eph. 1:12-13)

2:40  
nothing quick or shallow here  
untoward = crooked, perverse

2:41  
“added to the church” v. 47  
Baptism  
What is it? buried in water (Acts 8:38; Rom. 6:3-4; Mk. 1:10; Jn. 2:23)  
What does it mean? (1) Testimony of repentance (v. 38; Lk. 3:3).  
(2) Step of obedience (Mt. 28:28; 1 Pet. 3:21). (3) Picture of salvation (Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Pet. 3:21).  
Who is it for? (v. 41; Acts 8:36-37)  
What follows? (vv. 41-42)

2:43  
“signs of an apostle” (2 Cor. 12:12; Acts 3:1-8; 4:33; 5:12-16; 9:36-42; 19:10-12; 28:8-9)

2:44  
not communism - Acts 5:4

2:46  
compare 1:14; 2:1

### **3. Use Color Markings**

Colored pencils, pens, or highlighters are an excellent way to mark your Bible. Some try to use one marking system throughout their Bibles; but I have found that it is easier and more effective to use different color markings for different parts of the Bible. Following are some of the systems I have used in my own Bible:

- a. In Genesis I marked the mentions of the “altar” in brown.
- b. In Leviticus I marked the important phrase “I am the Lord your God” in yellow.
- c. In the Psalms I have used red to mark verses that mention everlasting

and eternal, dark blue for the second coming, orange for trusting God, green for blessings, purple for trouble, yellow for praise, pink for prayer, and brown for the Word of God. I have circled the verse numbers of the Messianic prophecies with blue. I have also bracketed unfulfilled prophecy or future events in red.

- d. In the prophetic portions of the Old Testament, I have used brown for verses pertaining to the Day of the Lord, light blue for the Messianic passages, green for passages referring to the remnant, orange for the New Covenant, dark blue for the regathering of Israel, yellow for passages describing the millennial kingdom, and red for the second coming. I have also bracketed unfulfilled prophecy or future events in red.
- e. In Proverbs, I have used red to mark verses dealing with counsel and learning, yellow for references to the tongue and speaking, green for correction, purple for anger and strife, orange for immorality, brown for friendship, blue for child training. I have used a blue circle around the verse number for verses about the home or family, a penciled circle for those about the sluggard, a green circle for those about the government, a brown circle for those dealing with the poor and poverty, and a purple circle for pride.
- f. In the Gospel of John, I have used red for the key word “believe,” green for the promises of “eternal life,” and yellow for the “I ams” spoken by Christ.
- g. In the book of Acts, I have used red for the verses which teach salvation by faith, blue for the verses about baptism, green for the verses about repentance, yellow for the names of the places visited by Paul, and orange for the verses that speak of Christ’s resurrection. In addition, I have marked the travels of Paul with brackets at the beginning and end of each journey.
- h. In 1 John, I marked the word “commandment” in yellow and the word “believe” in red.
- i. In Revelation, I have marked the names of the seven churches in blue, the seals in purple, the trumpets in orange, the mentions of God’s wrath in red, and the vials in brown.

#### 4. Use Symbols

You can also mark your Bible using simple symbols. One advantage of symbols over colors is that you can use a simple pencil to draw the symbols. Symbols can be anything you like. For example, you can use a dove to mark passages dealing with the Holy Spirit, a crown for O.T. passages dealing with the Messiah, a heart for passages dealing with man's nature, a musical note for passages about music, etc. As with colored markings, I recommend that you use different symbols for different books of the Bible and not try to use one set of symbols throughout the Bible.

The following are some simple symbols that are useful for marking: a cross, an x, an open circle, an enclosed circle, an open box, an enclosed box, a star or asterisk, a downward arrow, an upward arrow, and a sideward arrow. These are easy to draw, even if you do not have artistic talent, and they can be drawn quickly. You can assign a meaning to each of these symbols, depending upon what you want to mark in any particular book. With these symbols alone, you can mark 10 different things.



For example, you could mark the Old Testament prophets by using a star for Messianic prophecies, an enclosed circle for the great tribulation a down arrow for the second coming, an up arrow for the resurrection, a side arrow for the regathering of Israel, an x for references to the remnant of Israel, an empty box for the new covenant, and a circle for the millennial kingdom.

- |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| * - Messianic prophecies | ← - regathering of Israel |
| ● - great tribulation    | × - remnant of Israel     |
| ↓ - second coming        | □ - new covenant          |
| ↑ - resurrection         | ○ - millennial kingdom    |

# RULES OF BIBLE INTERPRETATION

The rules of Bible interpretation are also called *hermeneutics*, meaning “the science of the interpretation of literature.” While the rules of Bible interpretation are similar to those of literature in general, there are some significant differences resulting from the supernatural character of the Bible.

We will deal with these rules more thoroughly as we go through the various studies in this course, but at this point, I want to lay out some of the most important rules of Bible interpretation so they will be fresh in our minds.

Outline for this section:

1. Context is all important in defining words and interpreting passages.
2. Clear passages must interpret the less clear.
3. Scripture must be compared with Scripture
4. The literal sense of Scripture must rule.
5. The Bible must be allowed to define its own figurative language.
6. Parables do not define doctrine, but illustrate doctrine.
7. God’s revelation to man in the Scriptures is progressive in nature.
8. The Gospels and Acts are transitional.
9. Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles.
10. The Bible must be studied dispensationally.
11. Old Testament parallelism must be understood.
12. If two or more interpretations are supported by the passage, both might be correct.
13. What the Bible does not say is as important as what it does say.
14. Caution and careful study solve most problems.

## **1. CONTEXT IS ALL IMPORTANT IN DEFINING WORDS AND INTERPRETING PASSAGES.**

The first and foremost rule of Bible interpretation is to define its meaning according to context. Absolutely nothing is more important than this. Thus it is necessary to know what the immediate book and chapter is about. The Bible is a self-interpreting Book if we allow the context to rule.

- a. Consider the phrase “profane and vain babblings” in 2 Timothy 2:16.

What does this mean? The very first thing to do is to look at the context. There we learn that “profane and vain babblings” are (1) those things that are contrary to sound doctrine (v. 15, 18), (2) those things that produce confusion and bad fruit (v. 16), and (3) those things that are harmful to the Christian life (v. 17).

- b. Consider the phrase “foolish questions” in Titus 3:9. What is this? Again, the context defines the phrase. Foolish questions are questions (1) that claim that good works are not important (v. 8), (2) that produce strife (v. 9), (3) that misuse the law (v. 9), (4) that are unprofitable (v. 9), (5) that are used by false teachers (v. 10).
- c. Consider the phrase “that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation” in 2 Peter 1:20. This has been interpreted in several ways, but the meaning is clearly given in the next verse. It means that the human authors of the Bible did not invent the words that they wrote, but that they wrote what they were given by the Holy Spirit.
- d. Consider the word “perfect” in 2 Timothy 3:17. Does this mean sinlessly perfect? No, the word is defined in the rest of the verse. It means “*thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*” It means perfect in the sense of fully equipped to do God’s will.
- e. Consider the apparent contradiction between James 2:24 and Romans 3:24 and 4:5. The apparent contradiction between James and Paul disappears when we consider the context. Paul, on one hand, was addressing the subject of salvation, of how a lost man can be made right with God, and he tells us that the sinner must trust exclusively in the grace of Jesus Christ for salvation. James, on the other hand, is addressing the subject of Christian service, of how a saved man can please God in this life. He tells us that true faith is evident by works. There is no contradiction if one considers the context of each statement. Paul is addressing the unsaved sinner’s perspective. The sinner must trust Jesus Christ exclusively for salvation; he must reject his own filthy works (Isaiah 64:6) and all self-righteousness (Romans 9:30-33) and lean totally upon the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting wholly in His perfect and complete redemption. James, on the other hand, is addressing the Christian’s perspective. The Christian claims to have faith in Jesus Christ. He is therefore to diligently serve God and to

walk in His commandments. Those who live in rebellion and who ignore the Word of God demonstrate that they do not possess true saving faith, that they are deceiving themselves.

- f. Compare Luke 21:13-15 and 2 Timothy 2:15. There are many preachers in the southern part of the United States that do not believe in studying to prepare sermons. They follow this passage in Luke, but in so doing they ignore the context. Jesus was talking about imprisonment for His name's sake. In that situation, we are instructed simply to trust Him to give us the right answer for our persecutors. But generally speaking, the preacher is instructed to study diligently in order to rightly interpret the Scripture, and that is the context of 2 Timothy 2. See also 2 Timothy 2:2 and Titus 1:9 which require that the preacher be taught the Word of God so that he can be qualified to teach others.

## **2. SCRIPTURE MUST BE COMPARED WITH SCRIPTURE.**

Another important rule of Bible interpretation is to compare Scripture with Scripture (1 Cor. 2:13). That is why it is good to have a Bible with cross-references and to use the *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, which has hundreds of thousands of cross-references.

- a. Comparing Scripture with Scripture is essential for developing sound doctrine. If Scripture is interpreted in an isolated fashion, the result will often be a wrong interpretation. Arthur T. Pierson wisely warns: "No investigation of Scripture, in its various parts and separate texts, however important, must impair the sense of the supreme value of its united witness. There is not a form of evil doctrine or practice that may not claim apparent sanction and support from isolated passages; but nothing erroneous or vicious can ever find countenance from the Word of God when the whole united testimony of Scripture is weighed against it. Partial examination will result in partial views of truth which are necessarily imperfect; only careful comparison will show the complete mind of God."

For example, in 1 Corinthians 9:22 Paul says, "*I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*" If this is isolated from the rest of Scripture one can assume that Paul was willing to do



anything to reach the lost, including adopt their lifestyle. This is a doctrine that is popular among the “rock & roll Christian” crowd today. However, when one compares Scripture with Scripture, we find that Paul did not mean this. For example, in Galatians 5:13 Paul said, *“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.”* Thus Paul’s liberty was not the liberty to serve the flesh in any way. For example, he would never have allowed any of the Christian women ministering with him to dress immodestly, as the Christian rock crowd does today. Paul also taught that believers are to *“abstain from all appearance of evil”* (1 Thess. 5:22). That is the strictest form of separation, and Paul would not have done anything contrary to this in his own life and ministry. For instance, he would not worn long hair, because the Bible says that is a shame and thus would have the appearance of evil (1 Cor. 11:14). Thus when we compare Scripture with Scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are able to interpret the Bible accurately and to know sound doctrine.

Consider Acts 2:38, which some isolate in order to teach that baptism is necessary for salvation, in spite of the fact that large numbers of verses teach that salvation is by faith alone through God’s grace alone, and that works do not save us (i.e., John 1:11-12; 3:16-18, 36; 6:29; Acts 16:30-31; Romans 3:24; 4:1-8; 11:6; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7; 1 John 5:11-13). Other verses teach that baptism is an act that follows salvation by faith (Acts 8:36-38; 10:43-48; 16:30-33; 18:8). Peter himself later said that baptism is a “figure” (1 Pet. 3:21). Acts 2:38 must not be interpreted privately, by itself, but it must be interpreted in light of the teaching of the entire Bible. When we do this, we see that the baptism for remission of sins means baptism *because* one’s sins have been remitted by faith in Jesus Christ, not *in order for* one’s sins to be remitted.

- b. Not only does the meaning of a verse or passage become clear by comparing it with other Scriptures, but Bible difficulties often melt away by this means.

Consider, for example, Numbers 13:1-3 and Deuteronomy 1:22-23. The account in Numbers says that God ordered the spies to be sent;

whereas the account in Deuteronomy says that the people requested this. By comparing the passages one with the other we find that both are true. In Deuteronomy Moses gives the details behind the command given in Number 13. The people were hesitant to enter immediately into the land and wanted spies to be sent to reconnoiter the situation. God allowed the people to follow their desire and commanded Moses to send the spies. Of course, God knew that most of the spies would return with an evil report and that their unbelief and the unbelief of the nation would result in judgment. The fact that God often allows men to pursue their sin and unbelief is a fearful thing.

### **3. CLEAR PASSAGES MUST INTERPRET THE LESS CLEAR.**

False teachers like to use difficult and obscure passages to build their doctrines and allow such verses to overthrow the teaching of many clear verses.

For example, Seventh-day Adventists build their doctrine of “soul sleep” on some unusual verses in the Old Testament. They point to Job 27:3, for example, which says that the breath is the spirit. They then say that since the breath is the spirit, man does not have a spirit that can live after he dies. Thus, when man dies, he is simply dead and non-existent until the resurrection. But when we look at the clear teaching of other verses, we see that man is a three-part being (body, soul, and spirit) and the spirit of man lives after he is dead. Compare 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and James 2:26. The Seventh-day Adventists also use Ecclesiastes 9:5, which says the “dead know not any thing.” They claim that this supports their doctrine that the dead merely sleep in the grave until the resurrection, but they ignore the rest of the Bible which teaches that the dead are conscious. For example, compare Luke 9:28-33; 1 Thessalonians 4:14; and Revelation 6:9-11.

### **4. THE LITERAL SENSE OF SCRIPTURE MUST RULE.**

Dr. David Cooper said, “When the plain sense of scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense, but take every word at its primary literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context clearly indicate otherwise.”

- a. God gave the Scripture to reveal truth to man, not to hide it or confuse it (Deut. 29:29). He therefore used the normal rules of human language.

- b. Jesus encourages the literal method (Lk. 10:25-26). Jesus expected man to interpret the Word of God in a literal fashion. Men are accountable before God to read the Bible and understand it by the normal rules of human language.
- c. If the literal sense is not followed, no one can be certain of the meaning. By the allegorical method the mind of the interpreter becomes the authority. Consider Revelation 20:1-3. If this passage does not mean that a literal angel binds a literal devil in a literal bottomless pit for a literal thousand years, we have no way of knowing what it does mean. If it does not mean what it says, it could mean anything that any interpreter says it means. Thus, the teaching of the Bible is thrown into complete and permanent confusion by the allegorical method.
- d. If the literal sense is not followed, the student is a slave to enlightened teachers who have the “key.”
- e. The Bible’s prophecies were fulfilled literally, which means that the Bible must be interpreted literally. Consider the prophecy of Christ’s first coming in Psalm 22. In this Psalm alone, there are many specific prophecies about Christ’s death, and they were literally fulfilled:
  - Psa. 22:1 – Jesus’ words on the cross (Mat. 27:46)
  - Psa. 22:6-8, 12-13 – The people reviled Jesus (Mat. 27:39-44)
  - Psa. 22:11 – There were none to help Him (Mk. 14:50; Heb. 1:3)
  - Psa. 22:14-16 – They crucified Him (Mat. 27:35)
  - Psa. 22:17a – They did not break his bones (Jn. 19:33)
  - Psa. 22:17b – They stared at Him (Mat. 27:36)
  - Psa. 22:18 – They gambled for his garments (Mat. 27:35; Jn. 19:24)

In contrast to the literal approach to Bible interpretation is the ALLEGORICAL METHOD. By this method, the mind of the interpreter becomes the authority and one can never be certain what the Bible means. The allegorical method of interpretation is particularly applied to the prophetic portions of Scripture.

- a. For example, the Geneva Bible note at Revelation 9:11 identifies “the Angel of the bottomless pit” as “Antichrist the Pope, king of hypocrites and Satan’s ambassador.” There is no reason, though, to see the angel of the bottomless pit as anything other than a literal fallen angel in a

literal bottomless pit.

- b. Harold Camping, founder of Family Christian Radio, came up with the following allegorical interpretation of Revelation 11:7. He says the two witnesses represent the church. The church has been in the great tribulation but has now been killed. Therefore, the church is dead; God is through with churches and pastors and they have no more Scriptural authority.
- c. New Agers also interpret the Bible “spiritually.” Levi Dowling, in the Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ, says that the man bearing a pitcher of water in Luke 22:10 signifies coming of Age of Aquarius.

## **5. THE BIBLE MUST BE ALLOWED TO DEFINE ITS OWN FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.**

The Bible contains symbolism, figures of speech, poetry; but, as in normal language, these are identifiable and can be interpreted. (For more about this see the *Advanced Bible Studies Series* course on “Understanding Bible Prophecy.”)

Figurative language is defined first by the immediate context and second by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

- a. *Oftentimes the figurative language is explained in the immediate context, and that is the first place to look.* Consider the book of Revelation. Chapter one uses some figurative language, but it is clearly identified. In Revelation 1:12 and 16, we see “seven golden candlesticks” and “seven stars,” but those are explained in verse 20. In verses 12-16 we have a description of Christ, and some of it is symbolic, as we see by the use of terms such as “like wool” (v. 14), “white as snow” (v. 14), “as a flame of fire” (v. 14), “like unto fine brass” (v. 15), “as the sound of many waters” (v. 15), “as the sun shineth in his strength” (v. 16). When we come to Revelation 4, the future prophecies begin, and figurative language is still clearly identified. In verse 3 we read that the one on the throne was “to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone” and that around the throne was a rainbow “like unto an emerald.” In verse 7 we find that the beasts were like things that are known on earth. The rest of the things described in that chapter are not figurative.

- b. Sometimes the reader of the Bible has to go to another passage to explain figurative language. For example, Revelation 4:5 says, “And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD.” This is explained by comparing other Scripture. The same description is used in Rev. 5:6 and Isaiah 11:2. These passages teach us that this figurative description of the Holy Spirit refers to the following things. (1) The omniscience of the Holy Spirit. This is what we see both in Rev. 4:5 and in 5:6. In Rev. 4:5 the seven Spirits are likened to lamps of fire, which speaks of enlightenment, describing the Holy Spirit’s work of giving wisdom and understanding to all of the creation. In Rev. 5:6 the seven Spirits are “sent forth into all the earth,” referring to the Holy Spirit being everywhere present on the earth. (2) The seven Spirits also refers to the seven offices of the Holy Spirit, as described in Isaiah 11:2.

## **6. PARABLES DO NOT DEFINE DOCTRINE, BUT ILLUSTRATE DOCTRINE.**

It is a mistake to build doctrine upon a parable. Parables illustrate doctrine and usually have one central teaching. This is illustrated in the parable in Luke 18:1-8. This parable has one main point: “*men ought always to pray, and not to faint*” (verse 1). It teaches the importance of perseverance in prayer. If one tried to look deeply into the parable to find other teachings, he could go into error, because the parable contains more contrasts with reality than similarities. The judge depicts God, and the woman depicts the believer coming to God in prayer. Consider the contrasts between the woman and the judge and the believer and God: (1) She came to an unjust judge; we come to the righteous Father (Jn. 17:25). (2) She was kept at a distance; we come boldly (Heb. 4:16). (3) She had no friend to plead her case; we have an Advocate (1 John 2:1). (4) She seldom had access; we always have access. (5) She had nothing to encourage her; we have many promises (1 Pet. 1:4). (6) She was no relation to the judge; God is our Father (Rom. 8:15). (7) The judge only complied because he was wearied by the woman’s persistence; God answers our prayers because He loves us (Rom. 8:32). The parable was not given to teach doctrine about God or salvation or the Christian life in general; it was given to illustrate one main truth about prayer. This is true for all of the parables, and failure to understand this can lead to all sorts of error. See the section on “Studying the Parables of the Bible” for more on this subject.

## **7. GOD’S REVELATION TO MAN IS PROGRESSIVE IN NATURE.**

This means that God revealed His truth gradually as the Scriptures unfolded. Charles Hodge observes: “The progressive character of divine revelation is recognized in relation to all the great doctrines of the Bible.”

- a. One example of the progressive nature of revelation is the doctrine of the Trinity. We are given a hint of it in Genesis, in chapter one where God says “let us” (Gen. 1:26) and the plural Hebrew word “Elohim” is used for God. In Genesis 11:6-7 God is revealed as one and as a plural. In Psalm 45:6 God the Father is addressing God the Son, but this was not clear until Hebrews 1:8 was written. Thus, the doctrine of the Trinity does not shine in its fullest brightness until we get to the New Testament.
- b. The same is true for the doctrine of life after death. The Old Testament teaches many important things about life after death, but it was left for the New Testament to bring this doctrine out more clearly (2 Tim. 1:10). The false teacher often ignores this rule, deriving his doctrine from the Old Testament and then forcing that definition upon the New Testament. An example is the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of soul sleep, which is derived largely from a few Old Testament proof texts.

## **8. THE FOUR GOSPELS AND THE BOOK OF ACTS ARE TRANSITIONAL.**

Many heresies have been developed by the failure to understand the transitional nature of the Gospels and Acts.

- a. In the Gospels Christ first comes to “his own” (Jn. 1:11), the people of Israel, presenting Himself as the Messiah, and was rejected. The church is not mentioned until Matthew 16:18, where Jesus says: “*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” This statement was made after the Jewish leaders had rejected Jesus’ great miracles of Matthew 15:30-39. In His earthly life Christ lived as a Jew, living under the Law. He said, “*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil*” (Mat. 5:17). Much that is in the Gospels is therefore directed to Israel rather than to church age believers, and we must understand this if we are to

properly interpret this part of Scripture.

- (1) Consider the Sermon on the Mount, for example, Jesus established the Law for its intended purpose, which is to reveal sin and lead sinners to Christ. He showed that the Law must be obeyed from the heart (Mat. 5:17-19). By this teaching we see that it is impossible for a fallen sinner to keep the Law and thus obtain salvation through it. The Law is not the gospel; it prepares the way for the gospel by exposing man's sin and need for a Savior (Rom. 3:19-22; Gal. 3:10-13, 24-25). In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus also preached the principles of the kingdom of God. These are the principles by which men will live in the kingdom that Christ will establish upon His return, after He turns His attention back to Israel and the fulfillment of her promises. Thus, while the Sermon on the Mount contains many lessons about how we are to live in the church age, it is not written directly to church age believers.
  - (2) Consider Matthew 10. Here Jesus sent the apostles out to preach. Note that they were to preach only to Jews (vv. 5-6); they were to preach that the kingdom of Heaven is at hand (v. 7); they were to take no money (vv. 9-10). This is completely different from the commission that has been given to the churches. We are to preach to all nations (Mat. 28:19; Acts 1:8). We are to preach the gospel of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (Luke 24:46-48). We have the authority to take wages for the work of preaching (1 Cor. 9:1-14; 2 Cor. 11:8).
- b. The book of Acts is also transitional in three ways, and it is important to understand this if we are to understand the book properly.
- (1) First, it is transitioning between Israel and the Church. In the early part of Acts the Jewish believers do not yet properly and fully understand that the Gentiles are being accepted by God on the same basis and into the same spiritual body as the Jews. Thus God had to give a vision to Peter about accepting the Gentiles (Acts 10:9-17) and the church at Jerusalem had to hold a special conference on the subject of the Gentiles and their relationship to the Law (Acts 15). In interpreting the book of Acts we must keep this fact in mind. For example, the Jewish disciples continued to go

to the Jewish temple (Acts 3:1), but this certainly is not something we should do today, except perhaps to witness to the unsaved. (We must hasten to note that though there is this type of transition in Acts, this does not mean that the gospel preached in the first part of the book is different from the gospel preached later or that the gospel preached by Peter is different from the gospel preached by Paul. Those are hyper-dispensational principles that we reject and refute in the next section of this course.)

(2) Second, Acts is transitioning between the apostolic sign-gift age and the passing of that age (2 Cor. 12:12). The apostles were given special signs to authenticate their ministries and we see them exercising these signs in Acts (e.g., 2:43; 4:33; 5:12, 15; 19:12). When the work of the apostles was completed, which was laying the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20), their signs ceased. Thus we must understand that not everything in the book of Acts has a permanent life in the churches. The very office of the apostle itself was temporary. The special healings (Acts 3:1-8; 9:32-34), the raising from the dead (Acts 9:36-42), the blinding of heretics (Acts 13:9-11), and other such things were signs of an apostle. If all believers could perform such things in that age or if believers could perform such things since the apostles died, they would cease to be a sign.

(3) Third, Acts is transitioning between the use of tongues and its cessation (1 Cor. 13:8). Tongues were spoken on the day of Pentecost to the Jews assembled from many places (Acts 2:4-11). The tongues were various earthly languages that were spoken miraculously by the believers. On two other occasions tongues were spoken in Acts (10:46; 19:6), and on both occasions Jews were present. In 1 Corinthians 14:20-22 Paul explains that tongues-speaking was a sign to the unbelieving nation Israel. He quotes from Isaiah 28:11, and the prophet says in that passage that the sign would be rejected (*“yet they would not hear,”* Isa. 28:12). This is the key to understanding the doctrine of tongues. God gave the sign of tongues to the Jews during the early days of the church age, signifying the new thing that God was doing, which was extending the gospel to all men and bringing both Jews and Gentiles into one



new spiritual body. In Acts 2 Jews spoke in Gentile tongues, and in Acts 10 Gentiles spoke in tongues in the presence of the Jews. *Every time that tongues were spoken in the book of Acts Jews were present.* Israel rejected the sign and continued in unbelief and Gentile churches were established across the world. Acts 19 is the final time that tongues was spoken in the book of Acts. The fact that tongues was a sign to the Jews and was rejected and ceased must be understood if the book of Acts is to be interpreted properly. (For more about this see the book “The Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements,” which is available from Way of Life Literature.)

## **9. PAUL IS THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES**

Proper Bible interpretation requires that we understand the unique position that Paul has as an apostle to the Gentiles.

- a. Paul emphasized that he is the apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:13; 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11). He explains that God gave him a special dispensation of revelation (Eph. 3:1-11).
  - (1) This revelation dealt especially with the mystery of the New Testament body composed both of Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 3:6; Col. 1:26-27).
  - (2) Paul was also given a number of other special revelations or mysteries, including the mystery of Israel’s temporary blindness during this age (Rom. 11:25), the mystery of the translation of living saints (1 Cor. 15:53), the mystery of iniquity, which is the progress of apostasy in this age (2 Thess. 2:7), and the mystery of godliness, which is the incarnation of God (1 Tim. 3:16).
- b. We must emphasize here that Paul’s theology in no way contradicts that of the other apostles and prophets who wrote New Testament Epistles. Paul plainly states that he was not the only recipient of the gospel or of the mystery of the New Testament faith. In Ephesians 3:5 he emphasizes that the mystery “is now revealed unto his holy apostleS and prophetS.” Note that he says apostles and prophets plural. He repeats this in Romans 16:25-26, where he says that the mystery is now made manifest “*by the scriptures of the prophetS.*” Peter confirmed this in his second Epistle by writing about “*our beloved*

*brother Paul*” and saying that Paul had written to the same people that Peter was writing to and he included Paul’s writings with “*the other scriptures*” (2 Pet. 3:15-16).

- c. Yet there is a level of Jewishness in some of the General Epistles (James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude) that you don’t find in Paul’s Epistles. James, Peter, and John are apostles to the Jews and their Epistles reflect this. James writes, for example, to “*the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad*” (Jam. 1:1). He is writing to New Testament believers but his focus is on Jewish believers.
- d. The fact that Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles and was given a special dispensation of revelation means that we should go to Paul to develop the chief doctrines of the New Testament faith, particularly those doctrines relating to the gospel and to the church, and to clarify doctrinal issues. Paul wrote most of the New Testament, and his Epistles contain careful, systematic presentations of key doctrines of the faith. Paul is the New Testament believer’s chief theologian.
  - (1) Read the Mosaic Law and the believer’s relationship to it through Paul and you will come out on the right side (e.g., Rom. 3:19-24; 2 Cor. 3:6-18; Gal. 3; Col. 2:13-14). This will keep you from errors such as “Messianic Judaism” and Seventh-day Adventism.
  - (2) Read the four Gospels through Paul and you will know what parts are abiding for the church age and what parts apply more for the Jews.
  - (3) Read the General Epistles through Paul and you will not be led into false doctrines such as justification by faith plus works or losing your salvation. If, for example, James *seems to* contradict Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith alone, we let Paul settle the matter and then understand James in light of Paul, because we know that God gave Paul special dispensation in regard to the gospel and in the book of Romans he developed this in the clearest manner of any book in Scripture. (Further, we know that Paul was writing in Romans 1-5 specifically to lay out the gospel of salvation, whereas James was writing about Christian living.)

## **10. THE BIBLE MUST BE STUDIED DISPENSATIONALLY.**

We deal with this in the next section.

## **11. OLD TESTAMENT PARALLELISM MUST BE UNDERSTOOD.**

Hebrew poetry does not contain parallels of *rhythm* as in western style poetry, but parallels of *ideas*.

- a. There are two major kinds of parallels in Hebrew poetry that we want to mention here: COMPLETIVE and CONTRASTIVE. The following is partially adapted from J. Sidlow Baxter.

- (1) In COMPLETIVE PARALLELISM the second part of the parallel completes or fulfills or explains or amplifies the first part. It concurs with the first and develops it to an intended further point.

- (a) Consider the following two examples. We will see that more than being mere empty or flowery repetition, the second part colors, enriches, develops, and completes the first part.

*“Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,  
and put your trust in the LORD.”  
Psalm 4:5*

When the segments of the parallel are combined, we learn that God not only requires men to put their trust in Him but also to do righteousness. In a New Testament context putting one's trust in Christ is salvation, while doing righteousness is the fruit and effect of salvation. See Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 2:11-12; 3:4-8.

*“Our God is our refuge and strength,  
A very present help in trouble.”  
Psalm 46:1*

The second segment of this verse emphasizes and reinforces the thought that God is our refuge and strength by adding that He is a very present help in trouble.

- (b) In the following example we find a multiple completive parallel:

“Blessed is the man  
that *walketh* not in the *counsel* of the *ungodly*,  
nor *standeth* in the way of *sinner*s,  
nor *sitteth* in the *seat* of the *scornful*.”  
*Psalms 1:1*

The three lines form the completion of the one thought of what is required for a man to be blessed.

The three lines also advance the thought. We see triple parallelism in the nouns and verbs and objects of preposition:

walk	stand	sit
counsel	way	seat
ungodly	sinner	scornful

There is a progress of thought in each of these parallels. For example, there is a progress from *walking* to *standing* to *sitting*. “Walking” refers to casual relationship; “standing” refers to a more permanent relationship; “sitting” refers to an intimate relationship. If a man chooses to walk in the counsel of the ungodly he will eventually find himself sitting in the seat of the scornful.

- (2) In CONTRASTIVE PARALLELISM the first line or thought is contrasted by the next. Consider a simple example:

*Weeping may endure for a night;*  
*but joy cometh in the morning.*  
*Psalms 30:5*

The contrast is between weeping and joy. In the Christian life weeping may endure for a night, but joy always follows. Thus we learn that while weeping is limited in scope and has a definite end, joy has no such restriction.

- b. Obscurities are often dissolved by examining the parallels. Sometimes one line states the thought figuratively while the other states it literally, or sometimes one states it positively while the other states it negatively.

Exodus 22:28 says, “*Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.*” The expression “the gods” here is explained in the last part of the verse. It refers to rulers. Men are gods and lords in an earthly context only, referring to the divine image they bear from creation (Gen. 1:26, 27) and the royal authority they sometimes exercise under God. 1 Corinthians 8:5 also speaks of this. The Devil is called the “god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4). There is only one true God, of course, but the Devil is called a god because he is served by men in this world.

Isaiah 45:7 says, “*I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.*” The parallelism tells us the meaning. “I form the light, and create darkness” is the first half of the parallel. This clause contains a contrast between light and darkness. “I make peace, and create evil” is the second part of the parallel. This clause, too, contains a contrast—between peace and evil. The evil refers to the lack of peace, referring to trouble of various sorts. The verse is not speaking of moral evil, but times of evil.

## **12. IF TWO OR MORE INTERPRETATIONS ARE SUPPORTED BY A PASSAGE, BOTH MIGHT BE CORRECT.**

In situations when it is very difficult to be certain that only one interpretation of a passage is true, I tend to think that there might be more than one correct interpretation.

For example, 1 Corinthians 15:29 speaks of the “baptism of the dead.” It is very difficult to know precisely what this was. Following are two good possibilities:

- a. *It could refer to sects which practiced some sort of baptism for the dead.* “History indicates that there were sects which practiced baptism for the dead. Paul may be referring to them when he said, ‘Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead?’ But notice the change in pronouns in the next verse: ‘and why stand we in jeopardy every hour?’ Notice ‘they’ are baptizing for the dead and ‘we’ are standing in jeopardy. Paul does not include himself nor any Christian with those who were baptizing for the dead! Paul simply questions, ‘Why are they doing it if there is no resurrection?’” (Tanner, *Baptism for the Dead*).
- b. *It could refer simply to the act of baptism itself.* We are baptized for the

death in the sense that we are baptized to symbolize Christ's dead, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3-5). "As they receive baptism as an emblem of 'death' in voluntarily going under the water, so they receive it as an emblem of the resurrection unto eternal life in coming up out of the water; thus they are baptized for the dead, in perfect faith of the resurrection" (Adam Clarke).

### **13. WHAT THE BIBLE DOES NOT SAY IS AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT IT DOES SAY.**

See Deuteronomy 29:29. God chose the very words of the Scripture (Mat. 4:4), and every detail is important (Mat. 5:18; Gal. 3:16). If God did not say something in the Bible it is because He did not want to say it and it is not necessary, therefore, for man to know that particular matter.

a. It is thus wrong to build doctrine on the Bible's silence.

(1) For example, Genesis 2:3 says, "*And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*" The Bible does *not* say that God gave the sabbath to man at this point in time, yet Seventh-day Adventists and others who keep the sabbath today claim that men kept the sabbath from the beginning. This is *isegesis* rather than *exegesis*. It is reading doctrine into the Bible's silence rather than allowing the Bible to speak naturally for itself. (In fact, God elsewhere states that He first gave the sabbath to Israel in the wilderness and that it is a sign between Him and Israel. See Exodus 31:13 and Nehemiah 9:14.)

(2) Another example of this is the alleged "gap" between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. Many of the old dispensational commentators waxed eloquent about what happened in this "gap," even though the Bible is completely silent about such a thing and in fact there is no gap! (See the Advanced Bible Studies Series on "Genesis" for more about this.)

b. It is also wrong to speculate about questions that the Bible does not answer. For example, Dave Hunt, in his denial of Hell fire, asks questions such as the following. The answer is that we don't know and

we don't need to know. It's not up to us to try to figure out how these things will work. We can be assured that God knows how to make it work! Since the Bible plainly says the unbeliever's punishment is eternal FIRE, we should refuse to question it and obey Deuteronomy 29:29.

REGARDING MATTHEW 25:41 -- "But the 'devil and his angels' have no physical bodies, so how could physical flames, to which they would be impervious, have been prepared for them?" ("Justice, Forgiveness, and Transformation," March 31, 2008, Berean Call web site)

REGARDING REVELATION 20:15 -- "How could that happen through the torture of being thrown into the Lake of Fire? Will Hitler be in a hotter section? But how could physical bodies suffer greater or lesser heat in the split second of consumption? And how could degrees of physical torture distinguish between sins of so many different kinds and the motivation behind each?"

#### **14. CAUTION AND CAREFUL STUDY SOLVE MOST PROBLEMS.**

If an apparent discrepancy or error does appear, don't be hasty. Look into the matter carefully and prayerfully. Study the passage in its context. Define the words. Analyze the cross-references. Usually the problem will disappear.

- a. Do not depend on your memory. Look up the passage(s) in question and pay close attention to every word.
- b. Demand the precise details of any challenge that is made to the Bible's accuracy. If someone challenges the Bible require him be specific in the challenge so the exact problem can be examined. It is not enough for someone to claim, for example, that there are contradictions or problems in the Old Testament or with the genealogies of Matthew in general. Determine the precise nature of the alleged contradiction or problem.

# **Review Questions on Marking Your Bible and Rules of Bible Interpretation**

- 1-4. What are four tips for marking your Bible?
5. Why should you use a pencil instead of a pen when writing notes in your Bible?
- 6-9. What are four types of things you should write in the margin of your Bible?
10. What is another term for the rules of Bible interpretation?
11. What is the first rule of Bible interpretation?
12. How is the word “perfect” in 2 Timothy 3:17 explained in its own context?
13. How does context explain the apparent contradiction between James 2:24 and Romans 3 and 4?
- 14-17. What are four New Testament chapters that teach that salvation is by faith alone through God’s grace alone?
18. In what verse did Peter say that baptism is a figure?
- 19-21. Dr. David Cooper said, “When the \_\_\_\_\_ sense of scripture makes \_\_\_\_\_ sense, seek no \_\_\_\_\_ sense...”
22. What verse says that the secret things belong to the Lord but the things He has revealed belong unto us?
23. What is the non-literal approach to Bible interpretation called?
- 24-25. By this method, the \_\_\_\_\_ of the interpreter becomes the authority and one can never be \_\_\_\_\_ what the Bible means.
- 26-27. What are the two ways that we find the meaning to figurative language in the Bible?
28. The non-literal approach to Bible interpretation is applied to what portions of Scripture?
29. It is a mistake to build \_\_\_\_\_ upon a parable.
30. Parables illustrate doctrine and usually have one \_\_\_\_\_ teaching.
31. That God’s revelation is progressive in nature means what?



32. In what book of the Bible does the doctrine of the Trinity begin to be unfolded?
33. Many heresies have been developed by the failure to understand the \_\_\_\_\_ nature of the Gospels and Acts.
34. In the Gospels Christ first presents Himself as the Messiah to what people?
35. What verse says that Christ came unto his own and his own received him not?
36. In what chapter of Matthew is the church first mentioned?
37. How did Jesus establish the Law for its intended purpose in the Sermon on the Mount?
38. What is the first reason that we know that the commission in Matthew 10 is not for the churches today?
- 39-41. In what three ways is the book of Acts transitional?
42. In what verse did Paul mention the “signs of an apostle”?
43. What was the work of the apostles according to Ephesians 2:20?
44. What is the key to understanding the doctrine of tongues?
45. What is one verse in which Paul said he is the apostle to the Gentiles?
46. Paul is the New Testament believer’s chief \_\_\_\_\_.
- 47-48. Hebrew poetry does not contain parallels of \_\_\_\_\_ as in western style poetry, but parallels of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 49-50. What are two kinds of Hebrew parallelism that we need to understand to rightly interpret the Bible?
51. How does Hebrew parallelism explain the meaning of “gods” in Exodus 22:28?
52. Does the Bible say that God gave the sabbath to man in Genesis?
53. How long was the gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2?

# STUDY THE BIBLE DISPENSATIONALLY

One of the things that I am most thankful for in my Bible education is having been taught the importance of a normal-literal method of interpretation. I still fondly recall how that this opened up the Scriptures to me in a wonderful way when I was a young Christian. I didn't accept it blindly. I had filled my mind and heart with Scripture before I went to Bible School, and I had learned to test all things by it. I was trusting in promises such as John 7:17 and 8:31-32, and the normal-literal method of interpretation rang true to me as soon as I heard it. I knew that it was the truth, and I sensed that it was a very important truth.

*I believe that a consistent application of the literal method of interpretation will result in a dispensational theology.* We agree with the following statement by Charles Ryrie: "If plain or normal interpretation is the only valid hermeneutical principle and if it is consistently applied, it will cause one to be a dispensationalist. As basic as one believes normal interpretation to be, and as consistently as he uses it in interpreting Scripture, to that extent he will of necessity become a dispensationalist" (*Dispensationalism*, revised 1995, p. 20).

This, to me, is the bottom line, because I am convinced that the normal literal method of interpretation is the only proper method.

Not surprisingly, those who are committed to Reformed theology and its allegorical method of interpretation despise dispensationalism. Charles Ryrie, in his book *Dispensationalism*, gives many examples of this, including the following. Arthur W. Pink warned of the "crudities and vagaries" of dispensationalism and described those who follow it as "poor dupes" (Pink, *The Divine Covenants*, p. 10). John Gerstner called dispensationalism "a cult and not a branch of the Christian church" (Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, pp. 150, 262). John Bowman said Scofield dispensationalism "represents perhaps the most dangerous heresy currently to be found within Christian circles" (Bowman, "The Bible and Modern Religions: II. Dispensationalism," *Interpretation*, April 1956, p. 172). The *Presbyterian Journal* called it "a conservative heresy" (*Presbyterian Journal*, Jan. 2, 1963, p. 8). Rousas Rushdoony called dispensationalism "unbelief and heresy" (Rushdoony, Foreword to *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, 2nd ed., 1984). The faculty of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

included dispensationalism in their list of “isms” alongside of Seventh-day Adventism and Perfectionism (Arnold Rhodes, ed., *The Church Faces the Isms*, 1958).

## 1. What is Dispensationalism?

- a. The Bible teaches that there are great periods of time in which God is working out His eternal plan in man’s affairs. His objective is “*to gather together in one all things in Christ*” (Eph. 1:10). It is an eternal plan. Christ’s atonement was foreordained before foundation of the world (1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8). God is the great “*King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth*” (Psa. 74:12). These periods of time in God’s program are called “dispensations,” “ages,” “times,” and “days.” It appears to me that these terms describe the same general thing and are used in much the same way in the Scriptures.

- (1) The Bible refers to **DISPENSATION** in Ephesians 1:10. “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.” This is the Greek word *oikonomia*, which Strong defines as “administration (of a household or estate); specially, a (religious) ‘economy.’” It means “to manage, regulate, administer, and plan” (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*). This Greek word is also translated “stewardship” (Lk. 16:2-4). In Ephesians 1:10 it refers to a period of time during which God is accomplishing some aspect of His great plan of the ages.

- (2) Another Bible word for this is “**TIMES.**” We see this word in Ephesians 1:10 -- “*the fulness of times...*” Though the word *times* has various meanings in the Bible, one of its meanings refers to a period of time during which God is working out His purposes. In Acts 1:7 we find the phrase “the times,” referring to God’s plan. These are also called “the seasons.” It refers to a period of time on God’s great calendar. The Bible speaks of the “*times of the Gentiles*” (Lk. 21:24), the “*times of the restitution of all things*” (Ac. 3:21), and “*this present time*” (Rom. 11:5). The “times of the Gentiles” and “this present time” refer to the church age. The “times of the restitution of all things” refers to the establishment of

Israel's kingdom as promised in the Old Testament.

- (3) Another Bible word for this is “**AGES**.” This is from the Greek word “aion,” which is also translated “course” (Eph. 2:2), “world” (Mat. 12:32), and “for ever” (Rom. 16:27). The word “for ever” in the English Bible is “eis aion,” which means “into the ages,” and the phrase “for ever and ever” is “eis aion aion,” meaning into ages of ages (1 Tim. 1:17; 1 Pet. 4:11; 5:11; Rev. 1:6). The Bible refers to “this present world [age]” (Rom. 12:2; 2 Tim. 4:10), “ages past” (Eph. 3:5; Col. 1:26), “ages to come” (Eph. 2:7; Heb. 6:5), the world [age] of the resurrection of the dead (Lk. 20:35), and “all ages” (Eph. 3:21).
  - (4) Another Bible word for this is “**DAY**.” This term is used in many different ways in the Bible, and one of those refers to a period during which God performs a certain work. Examples are “*the day of salvation*” (Isa. 49:8; 2 Co. 6:2); “*the day of the Lord*” (Isa. 2:12); “*the last day*” (Jn. 6:54); and “*the day of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Cor. 1:8; Ph. 1:10; 2:16; 2 Th. 2:2).
- b. Following are some definitions of dispensationalism based on the previous terms. These are taken from Ryrie’s *Dispensationalism*, pp. 20-29.
- (1) Charles Ryrie: “Dispensationalism views the world as a household run by God. In His household-world God is dispensing or administering its affairs according to His own will and in various stages of revelation in the passage of time. These various stages mark off the distinguishably different economies in the outworking of His total purpose, and these different economies constitute the dispensations” (*Dispensationalism*, p. 29).
  - (2) W. Graham Scroggie: “[Dispensationalism is] the administration of the human race or any part of it, at any given time. Just as a parent would govern his household in different ways, according to varying necessity, yet ever for one good end, so God has at different times dealt with men in different ways, according to the necessity of the case, but throughout for one great, grand end” (Scroggie, *Ruling Lines of Progressive Revelation*, 1918, pp. 62-62).

- (3) Harry Ironside: “[Dispensationalism is] an ordered condition of things. ... There are various economies running through the Word of God. A dispensation, an economy, then, is that particular order or condition of things prevailing in one special age which does not necessarily prevail in another” (Ironside, *In the Heavens*, p. 67).
- (4) Clarence Mason, Jr.: “... in its Biblical usage, a dispensation is a divinely established stewardship of a particular revelation of God’s mind and will which brings added responsibility to the whole race of men or that portion of the race to whom the revelation is particularly given by God. Associated with the revelation, on the one hand, are promises of reward or blessing for those responding to the obedience of faith, while on the other hand there are warnings of judgment upon those who do not respond in the obedience of faith to that particular revelation. However, though the time period (age) ends, certain principles of the revelation are often carried over into succeeding ages, because God’s truth does not cease to be truth, and these principles become part of the cumulative body of truth for which man is responsible in the progressive unfolding revelation of God’s redemptive purpose” (Mason, notes on his course on Eschatology at the Philadelphia College of Bible, pp. 5-6).
- (5) Paul Nevin: “A dispensation is God’s distinctive method of governing mankind or a group of men during a period of human history, marked by a crucial event, test, failure, and judgment. From the divine standpoint, it is a stewardship, a rule of life, or a responsibility for managing God’s affairs in His house. From the historical standpoint, it is a stage in the progress of revelation” (Paul Nevin, “Some Major Problems in Dispensational Interpretation,” unpublished Th.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1963, p. 9).

## **2. What are the dispensations?**

The Bible does not specifically tell us how many ages there have been since God made man or how many there will be in the future. C.I. Scofield, author of the famous Scofield Bible, with many other well-known dispensational teachers, has taught that there are seven dispensations. Scofield said, “Each of the

dispensations may be regarded as a new test of the natural man, and each ends in judgment, marking his utter failure in every dispensation.”

That is one way that the ages of God can be explained and divided; but there are other ways to look at them, and the number seven is not necessary. The exact number of dispensations or ages is not what is important. You could say there are five dispensations, or eight, or ten, depending on how you define an age. The important point is that there HAVE been various periods during which God has worked out His purposes, and during these periods God has related to men in different ways and has required different things of them. To understand and interpret the Bible properly, one must understand this.

Personally, I believe it is profitable to divide the ages into nine categories as follows:

- a. Man Innocent: *Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden* (Genesis 1-3). This age extended from the creation of Adam to his expulsion from Eden. Adam and Eve were created sinless and innocent and they were given only one commandment, not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When they sinned, that age of innocence ended. We do not know how long Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden before they sinned, but we do know that they had no children until after the Fall because all of Adam’s children were corrupted by it (Rom. 5:12).
- b. Man Under Conscience: *From Adam’s fall to the Flood* (Genesis 4-8). During this period, God left man to his own devices. There was no law, but there were prophets sent by God, such as Abel, Enoch, and Noah. The result was that man corrupted the earth and had to be destroyed in the flood, with only Noah and his family being saved to continue the human race. This period lasted roughly 1,600 years.
- c. Man Under Human Government: *From after the Flood to the Tower of Babel* (Genesis 9-11). After the Flood, God gave Noah and his children new commandments. He told them to replenish the earth (Gen. 9:1). He gave them the flesh of animals for food (Gen. 9:3-4). He commanded them to put murderers to death (Gen. 9:5-6). He established the covenant that He would never again destroy the world with water (Gen. 9:8-17). Instead of going to the ends of the earth,

though, and replenishing it, the grandsons of Noah united together and attempted to exalt themselves against God at the Tower of Babel. This period lasted roughly 400 years.

d. Man Under Promise: *From Abraham to the Giving of the Law* (Genesis 12-50). During this period, God was building the nation of Israel in preparation for the giving of the law. He raised up Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob, then the 12 sons of Jacob, and he carried them down into Egypt. This period lasted roughly 430 years.

e. Man Under Law: *From Moses to the Coming of Christ* (Exodus to the end of the Old Testament). During this period, God put Israel under the Mosaic law to prepare for the coming of Christ. The law does this in two ways: (1) It shows man his sinful condition and his need of salvation. (2) It foreshadows Christ by many types. It is important to understand that men were never saved by keeping the law. Salvation has always been by grace through faith in God's Word (Romans 4:1-8). The law was given to reveal sin not to save men from sin. This period lasted roughly 1,500 years.

f. Man Under Grace: *From Christ to the end of the Church Age* (Acts to Jude). The church age actually began during the earthly ministry of Christ; at least the foundation was being laid during those years; but for the purposes of this study, we can simplify things and begin it with the book of Acts. During this period, God is calling out a special body of people from among all nations of the earth. So far this period has lasted almost 2,000 years.

g. Man Under God's Judgment: *The Great Tribulation* (Revelation 3-18). During this period, God will prepare Israel and the world for the return of Christ. (1) Through judgments upon sinful men. (2) Through judgments upon Israel which will cause her finally to awaken from her spiritual blindness and to turn to Christ. This period will last seven years.

h. Man Under the Personal Reign of Christ: *The Millennium* (Revelation 19-20). The second coming and millennial reign of Christ (Rev. 19-20). During this period, God will establish a kingdom on earth and the nations will be ruled with a rod of iron. This period will last 1,000 years.

- i. Man in the New Heaven and New Earth (Rev. 21-22). From this point on, God will continue to work out His plans from age to age throughout eternity, but the Bible does not reveal any further details.

### **3. The benefit of dispensationalism**

The following are three great benefits of dispensationalism:

- a. Dispensational theology exalts a consistent normal-literal method of interpretation throughout the Scripture.

We have already seen this. Dispensationalism is the only theology that uses the normal-literal method of interpretation consistently throughout Scripture.

- b. Dispensational theology helps us to study the Bible within its proper context. Following are some examples:

- (1) For example, Ezekiel 18:21-24 says men are judged by whether or not they keep the Law. Many have erred by thinking that this teaches us how to be saved. Those who believe you can lose your salvation use verses like these from the Old Testament to prove their doctrine. But the Bible student must interpret every passage in its context, and the context here is the Mosaic Law. The prophet Ezekiel was writing to the Jews under the Law. We know from the New Testament that the Law was not given to show men how to be saved; it was given to show men their unsaved condition so that they might flee to Christ for salvation (Rom. 3:19-24; Gal. 3:24-26).
- (2) Another example is God's judgment on Cain in Genesis 4:9-12. God did not put him to death for murdering his brother. Does this contradict what God later said to Noah in Genesis 9:6? No, it doesn't because Cain was living during a different age.
- (3) Another example is Matthew 10:5-15. Here Christ sends out His disciples to preach, but note the following restrictions: (a) They were to preach only to Jews (v. 6). (b) They were to preach that the kingdom of Heaven is at hand (v. 7). (c) They were to do miracles (v. 8). (d) They were not to carry any money or extra clothes (v. 9-10). (e) They were to carry no weapons (a staff) (v.



10). This is contradictory to the commands given later in the New Testament. Later Christ commanded His disciples to preach to all men (Mat. 28:18-20), to preach the gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection rather than the kingdom of Heaven is at hand (Mark 16:15), to carry both money and a sword (Lk. 22:35-36), and there is no command in Christ's Great Commission to the churches to do miracles (Mat. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:46-48; Acts 1:8). What is the difference between the account in Matthew 10 and those given later? The difference is that they are spoken under different dispensations. In Matthew 10 Christ was sending His apostles out to proclaim to Israel that their Messiah and King was present. That is the meaning of "*the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" It was at hand because the King was standing right there! Thus the messengers were to go only to Israel, were to do miracles to demonstrate that the Messiah had come as foretold in the prophets. They were not to provide anything for themselves because that commission lasted only a brief period of time. Later, after Israel had rejected Christ, He began to prepare for the church age and the preaching of the gospel to the ends of the earth. The program of God changed and so did the methods and requirements.

- (4) Another example is Revelation 13:10. This is written in the context of the reign of the Antichrist during the Great Tribulation (see verses 1-8). When verse 10 says, "*He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword,*" it refers to the Antichrist's attempt to force all people to worship him (v. 8). It is not referring to using the sword at any time and in any age. Jesus Himself at one point instructed His disciples to get a sword (Lk. 22:36). What Revelation 13:10 is warning about is joining hands with the Antichrist in his war against those who refuse to bow to him.
- (5) Another example is Micah 4:3, which says the nations will beat their swords into plowshares. The United Nations and the peace movements have taken this as their motto. Outside of the UN building in New York City is a statue of a man beating a sword into a plowshare, but this is taken out of its dispensational

context. Micah 4:2 won't be fulfilled until Christ returns and establishes His kingdom in Israel (Micah 4:1-2).

c. Dispensationalism makes a clear distinction between Israel and the Church.

(1) The Bible makes this distinction:

(a) 1 Corinthians 10:32 plainly states that there are three categories of men in the world today: *"Give none offence, neither to the JEWS, nor to the GENTILES, nor to the CHURCH of God."* Obviously, then, Israel is not the same as the Church.

(b) Israel's covenants with God (other than the Mosaic covenant) are unconditional, eternal, and unchangeable. For example, consider the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7. This is an extension of the covenant God made with Abraham. In His covenant with David, God reaffirmed the unconditional Abrahamic covenant through David's family (2 Sam. 7:10); promised that the throne of David would be established forever through David's seed (2 Sam. 7:13); promised chastisement for sin, but never annulment of the promise (2 Sam. 7:14-15); and established David's house and kingdom forever (2 Sam. 7:16). All of this is fulfilled through Jesus Christ, David's Son, who has inherited the throne of David (Mat. 1:1) and who will establish the Davidic kingdom at His return from Heaven (Isa. 9:6-7). God's promises to Israel have not failed. Israel sinned and has been judged just as God forewarned in Deuteronomy 28:15-68, but God also promised to restore Israel. See Deuteronomy 30:1-9.

(c) The New Testament tells us the same thing. In Romans 11:25-29 we are told that God has set aside Israel temporarily at this time, but that He will yet restore Israel and fulfill His promises to her. This means that all of God's promises to Israel in the Old Testament will be literally fulfilled, and they are not being fulfilled in the Church "spiritually."

(2) Some of the most common errors in theology have come about through confusing the Church with Israel. This is called Replacement Theology. Israel is replaced with the church.

- (a) ROMAN CATHOLICISM. Rome claims to be the new Israel and has adopted many things from the Old Testament Mosaic dispensation, such as priests, temples, candles, incense, and sprinkling of water. This is one reason why Rome attempted to take over the Holy Land during the Crusades. It is also why Rome has historically opposed Israel's desire to control Jerusalem.
- (b) PROTESTANTISM. By this, I am referring especially to Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, Reformed, and Lutheran denominations. When the Protestant denominations left Rome between the 1500s and 1700s, they did not leave behind all of Rome's errors. One of the errors they brought with them pertains to ecclesiology and the interpretation of prophecy. They teach that Israel was permanently rejected by God and replaced with the church, that the church is the continuation of Israel. They do not believe that the Old Testament promises and prophecies pertaining to Israel will be literally fulfilled. To one extent or another they have also adopted certain rituals from the Old Testament dispensation, such as priests, liturgy, infant baptism (which they claim is the spiritualizing of circumcision), sabbath-keeping (which they foisted onto the first day of the week), incense, etc.
- (c) THE CULTS also claim to be a continuation of Israel in one form or the other. For example, *the Worldwide Church of God*, founded by Herbert W. Armstrong, claimed that 10 of the tribes of Israel had been lost and had re-surfaced today in England and America and had been restored in his cult. This is called British-Israelism, and there are other heretical groups that teach a form of it. Jehovah's Witnesses apply things directly to itself, things from the book of Revelation that are for Israel, such as the sealing of the 144,000 from the 12 tribes in Revelation 7. *Seventh-day Adventists* claim that New Testament believers are obligated to keep the Sabbath and keep Old Testament dietary restrictions.
- (d) COVENANT THEOLOGY. The opposite of Dispensational Theology is Covenant Theology. This is the standard

Presbyterian theology. It is also called Reformed Theology. It can be traced back to the time of the Heidelberg Catechism of 1584 and was encapsulated within the Westminster Confession one hundred years later. There is considerable variety within Covenant Theology traditions, but the following are some of the standard characteristics:

- \* *Covenant Theology teaches that there were only two covenants.* Traditional Covenant Theology says there was a covenant of works before the Fall and a covenant of grace since the Fall, a covenant of works with Adam and a covenant of grace with Christ. The Westminster Confession stated, “The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience. Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ.” Another variety of covenant theology, called New Covenant Theology, says that the two covenants are the old covenant of law with Israel and the new covenant of grace with the church.
- \* *Covenant Theology claims that the Old Testament prophecies pertaining to Israel have already been fulfilled spiritually or allegorically in the church.* Covenant theologians believe that Israel has been permanently rejected.
- \* *Covenant Theology teaches that there is only one group of redeemed people,* which is Israel in the Old Testament times and now the Church, which supposedly has replaced Israel.
- \* *Covenant Theology has traditionally been accompanied by the practice of infant baptism,* which is seen as the entrance into God’s new covenant. They argue that since the old covenant had the rite of circumcision for babies, the new covenant must have the rite of baby baptism.

#### 4. The lie about dispensationalism

Some who despise dispensationalism have claimed that it was not taught until the 1800s. Some claim it was started by John Darby, founder of the Plymouth Brethren movement.

- a. While it might be true that a certain form of dispensationalism, such as Darby dispensationalism or Scofield dispensationalism, might not have been taught until more recent times, it is plain that a belief in dispensations goes all of the way back to the apostles. We have seen that the New Testament teaches that there are dispensations during which God has worked out His great purposes. These are also called ages, times, and days. In this sense, dispensationalism is 2,000 years old!
- b. The early Christians after the apostles taught a form of dispensationalism. Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-165) believed in four phases of history in God's plan: From Adam to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, from Moses to Christ, and from Christ to the eternal state. Irenaeus (A.D. 120-202) taught something similar, dividing the dispensations into (1) the creation to the flood, (2) the flood to the law, (3) the law to the gospel, (4) the gospel to the eternal state. In *Ages and Dispensations of the Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Larry Crutchfield observed that some of the early church leaders "came very close to making nearly the same divisions modern dispensationalists do."
- c. Influential Baptist leader Morgan Edwards, the founder of Brown University, was teaching the pre-tribulational doctrine in the first half of the 18th century. Between 1742 and 1744 he wrote a book presenting this doctrine. The book was published in 1788 in Philadelphia where Edwards was a pastor. John Bray, who for many years published a challenge that he would give \$500 to anyone who could prove that the pre-tribulational rapture was taught before 1830, was forced to pay out! The *Plains Baptist Challenger* observed: "If Morgan Edwards wrote a book in 1742-44 teaching the Pre-Trib Rapture, then many people must have read it. No doubt there must have been other preachers who read the same Bible that Edwards did and preached the same truth. I wonder if John L. Bray will offer \$500

to anyone teaching the Pre-Trib Rapture before Morgan Edwards? I hope he does. Of course Paul taught it, but the enemies of the Pre-Trib Rapture will never accept that. They just explain it away. Of course, the Apostle John taught it in the book of Revelation, but they spiritualize the book of Revelation away” (*Plains Baptist Challenger*, Lubbock, Texas, September 1995).

*(For more on this subject see article “Beware of Hyper Dispensationalism” at the Way of Life web site.)*

# Review Questions on Dispensationalism

1. Charles Ryrie said: "If plain or normal interpretation is the only valid hermeneutical principle and if it is \_\_\_\_\_ applied, it will cause one to be a dispensationalist."
- 2-3. What is the object of God's great plan of the ages and in what verse is this found?
- 4-7. The Bible teaches that there are great periods of time in which God is working out His eternal plan. These periods are called "\_\_\_\_\_,", "\_\_\_\_\_,", "\_\_\_\_\_,", and "\_\_\_\_\_."
8. The Greek word translated "dispensation" is translated by what other English word?
9. To what does the "times of the restitution of all things" refer?
- 10-12. The Greek word translated "ages" is translated in what other three ways?
13. Scroggie said that dispensationalism is "the \_\_\_\_\_ of the human race or any part of it, at any given time."
14. Mason said that dispensationalism is "is a divinely established \_\_\_\_\_ of a particular revelation of God's mind and will which brings added responsibility to the whole race of men or that portion of the race to whom the revelation is particularly given by God."
- 15-19. What are five dispensations in the Old Testament times?
- 20-23. What are three dispensations that are in the future?
- 24-26. What are three benefits of dispensationalism?
- 27-28. What are two chapters in the New Testament that teach the purpose of the Law of Moses?
29. What verse in the New Testament says there are three groups of people, Jews, Gentiles, and the church?
30. In what book and chapter of the Pentateuch did God describe all of the judgments that would fall upon Israel if she turned away from Him?
31. What passage in Romans says that God will fulfill His promises to Israel?
32. To confuse the Church with Israel is called \_\_\_\_\_ Theology.

33. Covenant Theology is also called \_\_\_\_\_ Theology.
- 34-37. What are four principles of Covenant Theology?
- 38-41. What are three important verses that teach us to test everything by Scripture?
42. What is another name for Modified Dispensationalism?
- 43-45. What are three principles of Modified Dispensationalism?
- 46-48. What are three principles of ultra-dispensationalism?
49. What verse says that the salvation message preached by the apostles “began to be spoken by the Lord”?
50. In what verse did Paul teach that the words of Jesus Christ are to be kept by the churches?
51. What book and chapter describes the great conference at which all of the apostles agreed that salvation is by grace without works and that the Gentiles are not obligated to keep the Law of Moses?
- 52-55. What are four Bible facts that demonstrate that Peter preached the same gospel as Paul?
56. What book and chapter teaches that salvation was by faith without works both before and under the Law of Moses?
57. What verse says, “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning”?
58. What verse says that the things in the Old Testament happened for our examples?
59. What is the lie about dispensationalism?
60. What Baptist leader taught dispensationalism and a pre-tribulational Rapture in the first half of the 18th century?



# USING BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

**I**t is our opinion that a few tools well used are better than one hundred less used. Many men and women of God, in fact, have gained a mature understanding of the Scriptures without any tools whatever, other than their own well-worn Bibles. The Bible did not even have chapter and verse references for over 1,000 years. It was divided into chapters in the 1300s and into verses in the 1500s.

This is not to despise the use of the tools God has made available to us in these less persecuted times. In this course we will deal with five of the most important Bible study tools: (1) A good *reference Bible*. (2) *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*. (3) *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*. (4) *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible*. (5) Some well-chosen Bible *commentaries*. Excepting the *Way of Life Encyclopedia*, which did not exist until the 1990s, these are chiefly the tools I have used to build my Bible preaching ministry and to write my first 50 books and 3,000 articles. The Bible student who will master the use of these valuable tools and apply them to diligent, persistent, and heartfelt Bible study will be well on his way to becoming a “workman that needeth not to be ashamed.”

## REFERENCE BIBLES

A reference Bible refers to a Bible that contains various studies and helps in addition to the Bible text, and it is an important tool for the serious Bible student. Following are some facts and tips on their use.

### Features of a Standard Reference Bible

The most basic reference Bible commonly has the following features:

1. Cross references
2. Chapter headings and dates
3. A brief concordance and/or dictionary

Usually the concordance in a study Bible is not very helpful because it is so limited, but the cross references are invaluable.

Beyond that, a more complete reference Bible contains many other features, such as the following:

4. Maps
5. Introductions and outlines of the books of the Bible
6. Notes and commentary
7. Topical studies
8. Larger dictionary
9. Larger concordance. The Scofield Bible contains an extensive and very helpful concordance. The Dugan Reference Bible, for instance, contains the complete Cruden's Concordance.

### **Things to Beware of about Study Bibles**

1. *Study Bibles often Use the Wrong Greek Text and Undependable English Versions.* Most of the newer study Bibles are based on undependable English versions and incorporate corrupt readings from the modern critical Greek New Testament. These will have notes that say things such as “oldest and best manuscripts omit this verse” (Matthew 17:21) or “oldest and best manuscripts read he who instead of God” (1 Tim. 3:16). But this is misleading, because what they should say, in the majority of cases, is that one or two or at most a handful of old manuscripts make these changes whereas the vast majority of manuscripts read the same as the Received Greek New Testament underlying King James Bible. The *Old Scofield Reference Bible*, though based on the King James Bible, contains marginal notes supporting the modern critical text.

2. *Study Bibles Can Contain Heretical Notes.* Another problem with reference Bibles is that many of them contain false or misleading notes. As with commentaries, the student must be careful to “*prove all things*” (1 Thess. 5:21) and not merely believe everything that is written.

For example, Dake's *Annotated Reference Bible*, edited by Finis Jennings Dake and published in 1961, was written by a Pentecostal, and his theology is reflected in his comments. A pamphlet that accompanies the Bible from the publisher claims that Dake received his teaching by divine revelation. Dake teaches that there was a pre-Adamite world ruled by Lucifer between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, that healing is guaranteed for the Christian, that tongues are for today, that the believer can lose his salvation, that God has a body, that each member of the Trinity has his own soul and spirit, that God created the races to “reproduce after their kind,” and many other fanciful and false things.

Another example is the *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, edited by Bruce Metzger and Herbert May. It is filled with heretical modernistic notes. The notes claim

that the Pentateuch is “a matrix of myth, legend, and history.” The worldwide flood of Noah’s day is said to be a mere “tradition” based on “heightened versions of local inundations.” The book of Job is called an “ancient folktale.” The book of Isaiah supposedly was written by at least three men. Jonah is called a “popular legend.” The *HarperCollins Study Bible* is also filled with this type of modernistic comments.

The notes in the *New Jerusalem Bible* and *New American Bible* contain Roman Catholic heresies. For example, they say that Matthew 16:18 refers to the pope.

**Following are some of the most helpful reference Bibles in our estimation.**

### **CAMBRIDGE WIDE MARGIN REFERENCE BIBLE**

#### ***Features***

- ◆ Clear, easy-to-read print
- ◆ Wide margins on all four sides
- ◆ Cross references
- ◆ Concordance
- ◆ Strong binding

### **WORLD WIDE MARGIN REFERENCE BIBLE**

#### ***Features***

- ◆ Clear, easy-to-read print
- ◆ Wide margins on all four sides
- ◆ Cross References
- ◆ Concordance

### **OLD SCOFIELD STUDY BIBLE**

The *Scofield Study Bible* was edited by Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (1843-1921). He fought in the Civil War from 1861-1865 under General Robert E. Lee. Afterward he was a lawyer and served for one year in the Kansas House of Representatives. He was a heavy drinker before he was saved, and his first wife divorced him. He was converted at 36 and ordained in a Congregational church in 1882. Scofield later recalled two great events in his life: “The first was when I ceased to take as final human teachings about the Bible and went to the Bible itself. The second was when I found Christ as Victory and Achievement.” In

1884, he remarried. He pastored First Congregational Church of Dallas, Texas, and Trinitarian Congregational Church of Northfield, Massachusetts. In his later years, he traveled extensively preaching on biblical subjects. He did not have formal seminary training, but he was a diligent student. In 1890, he published the Scofield Correspondence Course, which was turned over to Moody Bible Institute in 1914. In 1890, Scofield also established the Central American Mission through the influence of talks with Hudson Taylor of China. Between 1904 and 1907, Scofield and his wife traveled to England and Switzerland three times to do research and prepare the notes for his reference Bible. It was first published in 1909 and an improved edition appeared in 1917. By 1930, one million copies had been printed. The *New Scofield Study Bible* was published in 1967 and was revised and updated by many well-known dispensational Bible scholars, including E. Schuyler English, Charles Feinberg, Frank E. Gaebelein, Alva J. McClain, Wilbur M. Smith, and John F. Walvoord. The *New Scofield* contains more than 700 new footnotes and 15,000 new cross-references.

### **Features**

- ◆ Excellent cross references
- ◆ Helpful concordance
- ◆ A profitable chain reference system traces key topics through the Bible
- ◆ Dates of events at the top of each column
- ◆ Bible passages are outlined and contain excellent paragraph headings
- ◆ The notes and comments are conservative and dispensational and are largely accurate

### **Problems**

- ◆ The erroneous Gap theory is taught in Genesis 1:1,2
- ◆ The Scofield Bible from its inception has been committed to the critical Greek N.T. For example, the note at Acts 8:37 says, "The best authorities omit v. 37." The note at 1 John 5:7 says, "It is generally agreed that v. 7 has no real authority, and has been inserted."
- ◆ The New Scofield places its "better renderings" into the text itself thus modifying the King James Bible. We thus recommend the Old Scofield over the New.

Though not perfect, the Old Scofield Reference Bible is my favorite. I have a small edition that I carry on travels and a wide margin edition that I use for everyday study.

## **THE THOMPSON CHAIN REFERENCE BIBLE**

The *Thompson Chain Reference Bible* was compiled by Frank Charles Thompson (1858-?) and was first published in 1908. Thompson worked for 31 years on his study Bible, with assistance from his wife, Laura. He was an ordained Methodist preacher with a Ph.D. from Boston University, but at one point in his life he taught on the staff of the L.I.F.E. Bible Institute founded by the Pentecostal, Aimee Semple McPherson (Edith Blumhofer, *Aimee Semple McPherson: Everybody's Sister*, Eerdmans, 1993). The studies in his reference Bible, though, do not appear to reflect Pentecostal theology except perhaps in very minor ways.

The *Thompson Chain Reference Bible* has gone through several editions, each one an improvement over the previous one. The 5th edition was published in 1986. It is one of the most complete study Bibles ever published.

### ***Features***

- ◆ Extensive cross references and marginal notes
- ◆ Analysis of every Book of the Bible
- ◆ Extensive Topical studies (8,000). The Thompson topical studies are helpful and a topic can be followed through the Bible with this system.
- ◆ Biographical studies
- ◆ Archaeological studies and how they reflect on the Bible account
- ◆ Harmony of the Gospels
- ◆ Bible Atlas (color) and Bible land studies (journeys of Abraham, Israel, Christ, Peter, Paul, etc.)
- ◆ Dictionary of Old English words
- ◆ Helpful concordance

### ***Problems***

- ◆ There is very little space to write your own notes in most editions.
- ◆ It is very large and cumbersome to carry around.
- ◆ The cross references are linked to the topical system and are not as simple and straightforward as those in other reference Bibles.
- ◆ The Thompson Bible contains a misleading study on the history of the English Bible, falsely presenting the modern versions as superior to the old Protestant ones and failing to inform the reader of the corruption of the underlying Greek text. The Thompson study on English versions also fails to inform the reader of the corruption of paraphrases such as the Living Bible and the Today's English Version.

- ◆ Thompson had the wrong view of Bible prophecy and this is reflected in his studies. For example, the *Thompson Chain Reference Bible* views the book of Revelation as history rather than prophecy.

## **RYRIE STUDY BIBLE**

This was edited by Charles Ryrie of Dallas Theological Seminary and was first published in 1976 and then expanded in 1994.

### ***Features***

- ◆ Good cross references, concordance, color maps; harmony of the Gospels topical studies; summary of Bible doctrine; prophecies, miracles and parables of Christ
- ◆ Introductions and outline to each book
- ◆ Helpful explanatory notes written from a dispensational viewpoint
- ◆ Good margins for writing your own notes

### ***Problems***

- ◆ The main problem is that Ryrie is committed to modern textual criticism, uses the critical Greek N.T., and frequently corrects the King James Bible. For example a note at Acts 8:37 says, “most manuscripts do not contain this verse.” At Mark 9, the Ryrie note says, “Many manuscripts do not contain verses 44 and 46, which are identical to verse 48.” And at Mark 16:9-20, Ryrie says, “These verses do not appear in two of the most trustworthy (sp.) manuscripts of the N.T., though they are part of many other manuscripts and versions. If they are not a part of the genuine text of Mark, the abrupt ending at verse 8 is probably because the original closing verses were lost. The doubtful genuineness of verses 9-20 makes it unwise to build a doctrine or base an experience on them (especially vv. 1-18).” This strange note, therefore, claims that it is possible that part of the infallible Scriptures has been lost!

## **STRONG’S EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE OF THE BIBLE**

The author was James Strong (1822-1916). He was a conservative Methodist Bible scholar who was proficient in biblical Greek and Hebrew as well as some other ancient languages. As a professor at two Bible colleges, he defended biblical inspiration against the onslaught of Modernism that was beginning to sweep through the Methodist denominations of his day. He spent 35 years compiling his concordance, which was first published in 1890.

In my estimation, the *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* is the most important

Bible study tool ever published. Not only is it exhaustive in its treatment of the words of the English Bible, but it also links the English words to an exceptional dictionary of the Hebrew and Greek terms underlying the English. One does not have to know the Greek and Hebrew alphabets to use Strong's dictionary; he developed a masterly apparatus whereby each Greek and Hebrew word is assigned a number. The dictionary gives a concise definition of the Greek or Hebrew word as well as a list of the ways that word is translated in the English Bible, thus showing the Bible student how the word was used by the translators of the Authorized Version.

### **The Design of the Strong's Concordance**

1. The Concordance has two sections: the concordance itself and the Hebrew and Greek dictionaries in the back.
2. In the concordance, the Bible words are listed alphabetically in bold, all-capitalized letters. The words are followed by the list of verses in which the word appears. The Bible student can see the immediate context of the word as it appears in each verse. At the end of each line is a number corresponding to the Hebrew or Greek word that is translated by the English word. Numbers for Hebrew words are straight, while numbers for Greek words are *slanted* or *italics*.
3. The Bible student can see how many different Greek or Hebrew words have been translated into that particular English word.
4. By looking up the number in the Hebrew or Greek dictionary, the Bible student can find the following information: (1) English spelling and pronunciation, (2) the etymology or history of the word, (3) a definition of the word, and (4) other English translations from this Hebrew or Greek word.

### **How to Use the Strong's Concordance**

#### **1. Use the Concordance to find verses.**

The first use of a concordance is to help the student find verses in the Bible. When searching for a particular verse, *it is important to choose a word that is as unique as possible*. If you choose a common word, there will be too many verses listed and it will be difficult to find the one you are looking for. For example, suppose you are trying to find the verse that says "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." You can't remember the reference, but you remember some of the words in the verse. If you tried to look

up “thysself” you would find nearly 200 verses, and if you tried to find “heart” you would find 767 verses. Instead, you should look for “delight” or “desires.” There are 52 verses in the Bible that contain the word “delight” and only 3 that contain “desires.”

## **2. Use the Concordance to study the meaning of words.**

Word study is the most basic of all forms of Bible study. You can’t possibly understand a passage of the Scripture until first you understand the individual words. The following important four steps are used to find the fullest possible meaning of a Bible word in the Strong’s Concordance:

- a. First, look up the meaning of the Greek or Hebrew word.
- b. Second, see how the Greek or Hebrew word is translated elsewhere.
- c. Third, examine the immediate context. Always be careful *first* to interpret the word in its own immediate context.
- d. Fourth, see how the word is used in other passages. Bible words also interpret themselves within the context of key passages.

Let’s use some examples to illustrate this method:

*GRACE* (Eph. 2:8)

(1) 5485 “charis” (khar'-ece), graciousness (as gratifying), of manner or act (abstract or concrete; literal, figurative or spiritual; especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude)

(2) acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, grace(- ious), joy, liberality, pleasure, thank (-s, -worthy)

(3) Eph. 2:8-9. In the context we see that grace means that salvation is “not of works,” that it is a “gift.” By checking the context, the Bible student is able to test the lexicons! He is not dependent upon the “scholars” but can test any man’s definition with the Bible itself.

(4) The only way to find the full meaning of a Bible word is to look at all significant passages and to interpret each word within its own context. For example, in this case we learn that there are two different usages: grace for salvation (Eph. 2:8-9) and grace for Christian service (Eph. 3:7-8).

*HOPE* (Heb. 6:17)

(1) 1680 “elpis” (el-pece’), from a primary *elpo* (to anticipate, usually with



pleasure); expectation (abstractly or concretely) or confidence.

(2) faith, hope

(3) Heb. 6:17-19. Here we see that hope means something that is absolutely certain. It is based on God's promise (v. 18). It is a "strong consolation" (v. 18). It is sure and steadfast (v. 19). It is called an anchor (v. 19). Thus, there is nothing uncertain about the believer's hope.

(4) 1 Thess. 5:8 says the believer's hope is his helmet. That means it protects the mind from the Devil's lies about his relationship with God. If the believer's hope were not certain, it could not be an effective helmet against the Devil's onslaughts.

*SOBER* (1 Pet. 5:8)

(1) 3525 "nepho" (nay'-fo), to abstain from wine (keep sober), i.e. (figuratively) be discreet

(2) be sober; watch

(3) 1 Pet. 5:8. In the context, it is easy to see the meaning of the word. It means to be vigilant, to be on guard against the Devil and spiritual dangers, to be alert, cautious.

(4) 1 Thess. 5:6-7 further teaches us that "sober" means to be watchful, to not be drunken or worldly or spiritually careless.

*SIMPLE* (Rom. 16:18)

(1) Old Testament: 6612 "paethiy" (peth-ee'), silly (i.e. seducible)

New Testament: 172 "akakos" (ak'-ak-os), not bad, i.e. (objectively) innocent or (subjectively) unsuspecting.

(2) foolish, simple(-icity, one); harmless, simple

(3) In the context, we see that "simple" means one who is easily misled, one who is not careful in testing things by the Bible.

(4) Two other verses that use the term "simple" are Prov. 14:15 and Prov. 22:3. These verses teach us that "simple" means gullible and careless.

*BEWRAY* (Prov. 29:24)

(1) 5046 "nagad" (naw-gad), properly, to front, i.e. stand boldly out opposite; by implication (causatively), to manifest; figuratively, to announce (always by word of mouth to one present); specifically, to expose, predict, explain, praise

(2) bewray, X certainly, certify, declare(-ing), denounce, expound, X fully, messenger, plainly, profess, rehearse, report, shew (forth), speak, X surely, tell,

utter. For example, the Hebrew word is translated “sheweth forth” in Prov. 12:17.

(3) The context warns about having intimate knowledge of evil and not doing anything about it. Thus, even without consulting a dictionary, we would assume that the word “bewray” means to expose.

(4) When we look at the word “bewray” in Prov. 27:16 and Matt. 26:73, we see that it means to discover, to reveal, to uncover, or to expose something.

#### *TAKE NO THOUGHT* (Matt. 6:25,28,31,34)

(1) 3309 “merimnao” (mer-im-nah'-o), to be anxious about

(2) (be, have) care(-ful), take thought

(3) In the immediate context, “take no thought” refers to being full of worldly care in the manner of unsaved people (v. 32). It also means not putting God first (v. 33).

(4) By comparing this phrase in 1 Sam. 9:5, we see that to “take thought” means to be anxious, fretful.

#### *MYSTERY* (Matt. 13:10-11)

(1) 3466 “musterion” (moos-tay'-ree-on), from a derivative of muo (to shut the mouth); a secret or "mystery" (through the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rites)

(2) mystery

(3) The context tells us that a mystery is something that was not revealed in the Old Testament. The Old Testament foretold that the kingdom of Heaven will be established by the coming of the Messiah and the setting up of his glorious throne; but the Old Testament prophets did not foresee this present church age, during which the kingdom will be delayed and God is calling out a people from all nations. During this time, the Devil will be allowed to work and sow corruption in the world.

(4) When we look at other passages that use the term “mystery,” we see plainly that it means things that were previously hidden but now are revealed (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:3-5; Col. 1:26).

#### *LEAVEN* (Matt. 13:33)

(1) 2219 “zume” (dzoo'-may), ferment (as if boiling up)

(2) leaven

(3) In the context, we see the Jesus is using parables to teach about the “mysteries of the kingdom” (v. 11). This refers to this present time during which

the king has gone away to Heaven and evil is allowed to proceed in the world. The parable of the Sower teaches this (vv. 18-19). So does the parable of the man sowing in his field (vv. 24-25). Thus, we see from the context that the leaven in this parable must refer to evil that the enemy sows in the midst of God's work.

(4) From Matt. 16:6; 1 Cor. 5:6; and Gal. 5:9, we learn that leaven refers to sin and false teaching.

#### LUST (James 4:3)

(1) 2237 "hedone" (hay-don-ay), from *handano* (to please); sensual delight; by impl. desire

(2) lust, pleasure

(3) There are lawful lusts or desires and unlawful lusts. The same Greek word is used for proper desires as well as improper. The meaning of the word "lust" here is found in the immediate context: desires that create unrighteous fruit (vv. 1-2), desires that are not surrendered to God in prayer (v. 2), desires that draw the heart away from God to the world (v. 4).

(4) Illicit lusts are called youthful lusts (2 Tim. 2:22), worldly lusts (Tit. 2:12), fleshly lusts (1 Pet. 2:11), and ungodly lusts (Jude 18). Illicit lusts come from the flesh (Eph. 2:3). Such lusts are deceitful (Eph. 4:22) and they are hurtful (1 Tim. 6:9).

#### ROCK (Matt. 16:18)

(1) 4073 "petra" (pet'-ra), a (mass of) rock (literally or figuratively)

(2) rock

(3) The context tells us that Jesus was talking about Himself and not Peter (vv. 16, 20).

(4) By comparing 1 Cor. 10:4, we see clearly that the rock is not Peter but is Jesus Christ. He is the chief corner stone that anchors the entire building.

#### SPIRIT (Job 27:3)

(1) 7307 "ruwach" (roo'-akh), wind; by resemblance breath, i.e. a sensible (or even violent) exhalation; figuratively, life, anger, unsubstantiality; by extension, a region of the sky; by resemblance spirit, but only of a rational being (including its expression and functions)

(2) air, anger, blast, breath, cool, courage, mind, quarter, side, spirit((-ual)), tempest, vain, ((whirl-))wind(-y).

(3) In the context, we see that Job is referring to his breath. Some false teachers use this verse to teach that the spirit of man is ONLY his breath and thus when man dies, his spirit also ceases and he does not go to Heaven or to Hell.

(4) By comparing other usages of the word “spirit” in the Bible, we learn that spirit has many different meanings. (a) It refers to intelligence and skill (Ex. 28:3). (b) It refers to the emotions (Ex. 6:9). (c) It refers to demons (Le. 20:27). (d) It refers to angels (He. 1:7, 14). (e) It refers to the Holy Spirit (Ge. 1:2). (f) It also refers to the immaterial part of man that is separate from his body and that passes into eternity at death (Ec. 12:7; 1 Thess. 5:23).

### **3. Use the Concordance for topical studies.**

To use the concordance in this way, the Bible student must first determine what words are associated with that topic.

- a. For example, if you are studying SATAN, you will need to look up not only Satan, but also devil, devils, god of this world, prince of the power of the air, Beelzebub, serpent, etc.
- b. Or if you are studying the topic of CHASTENING, you would need to look up all of its forms — chasten, chastened, chastenest, chasteneth, chastening, chastise, chastised, chastisement, chastiseth — plus associated words such as admonish, affliction, convince, correction, rebuke, reproof, suffer, trouble, and, trial.

See the study on the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible* for more about cross-references and topical studies.

### **4. Use the Concordance to Get More Meaning from Verses.**

Following is an example of this:

Matthew 5:22. By comparing the use of the word “fool” in other Scriptures, one finds that the term can be used properly as well as improperly. See Psa. 53:1; Prov. 1:7, 22; Mat. 23:17, 19; Lk. 12:20; 24:25; 1 Cor. 15:36.

## **TREASURY OF SCRIPTURE KNOWLEDGE**

*The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* was first published circa 1836. The original *Treasury* had roughly 4,000 cross-references; the newer editions have about 570,000 references. The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself, and herein is the value of the *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*.

## HOW TO USE CROSS-REFERENCES

### **1. Use cross-references to find quotations from another part of the Bible.**

The Old Testament is quoted hundreds of times in the New Testament, and the most basic use of cross-references is to search out these quotations. For this purpose, a good reference Bible is sometimes actually more useful than the *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, because there are not as many references to search.

The following example illustrates this use of cross-references:

Matthew 26-27 (first read 26:56)

26:15 - Zech. 11:12

26:23 - Ps. 41:9

26:31 - Zech. 13:7

26:38 - Is. 53:3

26:50 - Ps. 41:9

26:55 - Is. 53:8

26:63 - Is. 53:7

26:64 - Dan. 7:13

26:67 - Is. 53:5,7; 50:6

27:7 - Zech. 11:13

27:13-14 - Is. 53:7

27:22 - Is. 49:7

27:26 - Is. 50:6

27:29 - Ps. 35:15; 69:7

27:34 - Ps. 69:21

27:35 - Ps. 22:16, 14

27:35 - Ps. 22:18

27:36 - Ps. 22:17

27:38 - Is. 53:12

27:39 - Ps. 22:6,7

27:41 - Ps. 22:12

27:42 - Is. 53:4

27:43 - Ps. 22:8

27:45 - Is. 50:3

27:46 - Ps. 22:1  
27:48 - Ps. 69:21  
27:57-60 - Is. 53:9

## **2. Use cross-references to find the interpretation of verses.**

This is one of the most important ways of interpreting passages, because by searching cross-references you are comparing Scripture with Scripture. Consider these examples:

Mat. 11:12 -- Jn. 6:15  
Mat. 11:14 -- Mal. 4:5-6; Lk. 1:17  
Mat. 16:28 -- 2 Pet. 1:16-18

## **3. Use cross-references to find more meaning from verses.**

Cross-references can help the student find companion passages that will provide additional meaning. For example, compare Christ's healing of the withered hand in Matthew 12:9-14 with the same account in Mark 3 and Luke 6. Mark adds that Jesus "*looked round about him with anger*" (Mk. 3:5) and Luke adds that the Pharisees "*were filled with madness*" (Lk. 6:11).

# **WAY OF LIFE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE BIBLE & CHRISTIANITY**

The fourth edition of this Bible Encyclopedia contains 560 large-format pages of information with over 6,000 entries and over 7,000 cross-references. Many preachers have told us that it is their favorite Bible study tool.

## **HOW TO USE THE WAY OF LIFE BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIA**

**1. Use it to find the meaning of Bible words.** In addition to the editor's own extensive doctrinal word studies and the consultation of many other resources, we have liberally included definitions from the famous Webster's 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language*. Noah Webster (1758-1843) was a master lexicographer and he was not strictly secular in his approach to words, as the vast majority of the lexicographers have been. Webster brought a wide knowledge of foreign languages to his work. Ultimately he mastered 26 languages, and he spent a full decade in tracing the origin of English words in these languages—but he was always oriented, first and foremost, to the Bible

and to absolute truth. Webster was deeply influenced by the Second Great Awakening that swept through the New England states in America. It so happened that this Awakening was at its zenith in the years during which Webster was preparing his crowning work—a dictionary that was destined to standardize the English language in America and to help unite that country in mind and purpose for the century to come. This biblical environment makes Webster unique for the Bible student. While certainly not infallible and while not specifically written to define Hebrew and Greek Bible terms, it has been observed that Webster's dictionary was “the only [secular] dictionary in the world to ‘draw water out of the wells of salvation’--to utilize God's written word as a key to the meaning of words.” Consider Webster's definition of *convert*: “In a theological or moral sense, a change of heart, or dispositions, in which the enmity of the heart to God and his law and the obstinacy of the will are subdued, and are succeeded by supreme love to God and his moral government, and a reformation of life. Conversion is used in Scripture in a way similar to repentance.” It is obvious that the man understood spiritual things. We should also note that Webster was not far removed from the actual era of the creation of the King James Bible. He began his lexicographical studies only a little more than 100 years after the translators of the King James Bible had passed off this earthly scene. Though Webster's 1828 Dictionary is still in print, it is not widely available because of its cost and size. We have incorporated the heart of many of Webster's definitions pertaining to Bible words into our own volume for the edification of our readers. Let me hasten to say that we have taken pains to give credit where the distinguished lexicographer has been quoted.

**2. Use it to study out-of-use words and difficult phrases from the King James Bible.** An exhaustive list of words and phrases in the Authorized Version that have changed meaning are defined. Some complain about the “old language” in the King James Bible, but this problem is not difficult to overcome if the student will use the tools that are readily available, such as the *Way of Life Encyclopedia*. I would much rather have an accurate Bible that contains a few out of date words than an inaccurate Bible that reads like the morning newspaper. (Examples are Abusers of Themselves, Besom, Blood Guiltiness, Charger, Conversation, Cunning Craftiness, Foolish Talking, God Speed, Helpmeet, Itching Ears, Nephew, Puffed Up, Quench, Set On, Set Them At One, Superfluity of Naughtiness, Taken with the Manner, Unawares.)

**3. Use it to do topical studies and to study doctrine.** Practically every

doctrine of the Bible can be researched with this Encyclopedia. A key feature is an extensive system of cross-references. The student can study the full range of a Bible topic by following the suggested cross-references from entry to entry. (For example, consider the cross references listed with the topics Church, Eternal Security, Fear of God, God, Heaven, Hell, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Judgment, Prophecy, Salvation, Sin, Soul, Spirit, Trinity.)

**4. Use it to study commonly used extra-biblical Christian terms.**

There are many words that we hear in church and in Christian circles that are not included in Bible dictionaries because they are not Bible words. We have included a wide variety of these in the *Way of Life Encyclopedia*. (Examples are Apostate, Apocrypha, Catechism, Christmas, Cremation, Denomination, Diocese, Dispensationalism, Easter, Faith Promise, Infallible, Parallelism, Parish, Protestant, Rapture, Reverend, Seminary.)

**5. Use it to study various issues relating to morality and practical Christian living.** (Examples are Adultery, Capital Punishment, Child Training, Cremation, Dancing, Divorce, Employment, Fornication, Guidance, Home, Kill, Labor, Modesty, Pacifism, Polygamy, Sodomy, Wine.)

**6. Use it to study Old Testament types.** (Examples are Ark, Atonement Day of, Boaz, Brass Serpent, Cain, Candlestick, Coat, High Priest, Joseph, Laver, Melchizedek, Naaman, Passover, Tabernacle.)

**7. Use it to find the meaning of Bible customs.** (Examples are Agriculture, Calendar, Military, Money, Music, Weights and Measures, etc.)

**8. Use it to study Bible Prophecy.** The Encyclopedia contains the equivalent of a Bible college course on prophecy. (See, for example, Abomination of Desolation, Allegorical, Antichrist, Babylon, Covenant, Daniel, Day, Day of the Lord, Double Fulfillment, Ethiopia, Gog, Great Tribulation, Kingdom of God, Judgment, Millennium, Revelation, Second Coming, Seventy Weeks, Time.)

**9. Use it to study proper names in the Bible.** An extensive list of Bible names is included with definitions and key references. There is a wide variety of opinion among commentators and lexicographers regarding the definition of many Bible names. We believe it was providential that we found the *Dictionary of Bible Proper Names* in our research for this volume. The editor, Cyrus A. Potts,



made diligent search into the meaning of Bible names, and his definitions are the most precise and practical we have seen. In many cases, we have incorporated the definitions from this 100-year-old dictionary into our own volume for the edification of our readers. (Examples are Aaron, Benjamin, Cain, Eunice, Gamaliel, Joshua, Lot.)

**10. Use it to do research into the Christian denominations and movements.** Studies of major denominations and movements of Christianity are included. The history, doctrines, and present status of many of the major denominations and movements are included. (Examples are Anglican Church, Assemblies of God, Brethren, Charismatic Movement, Eastern Orthodoxy, Episcopal Church, Evangelical, Fundamentalism, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Modernism, Presbyterian, Unitarian, United Church of Christ, World Council of Churches.)

**11. Use it to do research into cults and false groups and to examine prominent false doctrines.** (Examples are Annihilation, Baptism - Infant, Charismatic Movement, Christ's Deity, Christian Science, Churches of Christ, Ecumenical Movement, Healing, Investigative Judgment, Jehovah's Witnesses, Judaism, Mass, Modernism, Mormonism, Neo-orthodoxy, Pope, Purgatory, Roman Catholic Church, Seventh-day Adventism, Soul Sleep, World Council of Churches.)

**12. Use it to answer the questionings of false teachers.** The Bible says of false teachers, "*whose mouths must be stopped...*" (Titus 1:11). The editor of the *Way of Life Encyclopedia* has been dedicated for 34 years to protecting God's people from error. We have not been content to read *about* the various heresies, but have studied directly from the writings of false teachers that we might be better prepared to give them an answer. Not only have we dealt with many of the most important cults and erroneous Christian movements and philosophies in this volume, but we have also addressed a great many of the chief areas of Scripture and doctrine which are under attack today. In all our definitions, we have kept in mind the need for a practical defense of the faith. (Examples are Adam, Allegorical, Beast, Blood, Church, Daniel, Death, Dynamic Equivalency, Eternal Security, Foolish Questions, Gospel, Hope, Inspiration, Investigative Judgment, Jonah, Justification, Moses, Preservation, Red Sea, Resurrection, Reverend, Soul, Spirit, Sunday, Tares, Timothy, Tongues Speaking, Whale.)

**13. Use it to study church polity.** The Encyclopedia is a practical manual

for church leaders and missionaries. (Examples are Apostle, Baptism - Immersion, Baptism - Infant, Church Discipline, Deacon, Evangelism, Footwashing, Lord's Supper, Ordain, Pastor.)

**14. Use it to study church history.** Many entries relating to church are included. (Examples are Barbe, Catabaptist, Golden Cup, Manichean, Mother of Harlots, Paulicians, Pedobaptism, Roman Catholic Church.)

**15. Use it to do research on the subject of Bible versions.** This Encyclopedia is designed to be a virtual handbook on Bible Versions. (See, for example, the articles on Bible Versions, Erasmus, King James Bible, Masoretic Text, Preservation, Pseudepigrapha, Received Text, Westcott-Hort.)

**16. Use it to be encouraged and strengthened spiritually.** The studies on words, topics, and doctrines are thorough and practical, even devotional, and are designed to be used by preachers and teachers, as well as to offer a Bible-school-type education to the average Christian. While we have attempted to give accurate Bible facts, precise definitions, and a wide breadth of information, we have also attempted to present a volume that is practical and edifying. As one church historian said of his book: "I have aimed at more than mere history. It has been my desire to connect with it Christ and His Word, so that the reader may receive the truth and blessing, through grace, to his soul." This has been our aim as well. (Examples are Boast, Concord, Fasting, Fear of God, Glory, Grace, Hope, Joy, Justification, Propitiation, Sanctification, Vanity, Zeal.)

**17. Use it for preaching and teaching.** The doctrinal material in this Encyclopedia is presented in a practical manner with clear, simple outlines that can be used for preaching, Sunday Schools, Bible colleges, home schooling, prisons and jails, etc. (Examples are Angels, Bible, Church, Cremation, Doctrine, Eternal Security, Evolution, Heaven, Hell, Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ, Prophecy, Resurrection.)

## **BIBLE COMMENTARIES**

On several occasions I have heard people condemn commentaries. One year when I was a young Christian I determined to read and study the Bible alone and to forgo consulting any commentaries or other extra-biblical sources. I did this religiously for a few weeks, and I can testify that the Lord made it plain to me that I need help from men and that He was not going to give me everything by direct enlightenment. It is not that the Bible is weak or insufficient; it is that I

am only one weak man and can't possibly know and understand everything without help. When I rejected the use of commentaries, I was left with my own meager resources. And though I have some gifts in understanding and teaching the Bible, I am at best only a very puny man with very limited ideas. Any man who is honest before God will acknowledge that most of his knowledge and understanding was gleaned from other men. God has ordained this. That is why we start life as a child and are dependent upon parents and tutors, and even as we grow older we remain very dependent upon the help of others.

This is why I believe in good commentaries. If I were shut up on a remote island with only the Bible, I am sure the Lord would give me everything I needed directly through His Word, but that is not His normal way of operation. He has given ministry-gifted men to the churches and He uses them to edify the saints (Ephesians 4:11-14; 2 Tim. 2:2). I praise the Lord that some of the excellent teaching of past and present generations has been captured in print so I can possess it and consult it whenever I please. Such material is priceless.

Even those who condemn commentaries want people to listen to *their* preaching and teaching. If it is right to listen to one preacher, why is it wrong to listen to other sound preachers? Some preachers seem to be afraid of books. I once heard a preacher say, "We don't need more books; we need more preaching." Yet a good Christian book is simply good preaching. While it is true that there are many heretical books available in the average Christian bookstore (we have warned about that in our video presentation "Dangers in Christian Bookstores"), it is not true that books themselves are wrong. God wrote a book! In Psalm 45:1, He said, "*My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.*" Indeed, God has a powerful pen, and what a Book He wrote! The apostles constantly communicated with the churches and individual believers through writing, and if they had possessed printing presses we can be certain that they would have used them. Men of God through the centuries have valued the written and printed page. Charles Spurgeon, who is called the Prince of Preachers, advised the preachers in his Bible College to "sell your shirt and buy books." Recently the *History Channel* made a survey of a wide range of knowledgeable people in various fields on what is the most important invention of history. The majority picked the printing press.

Charles Spurgeon did not have a lot of patience with preachers who despise commentaries. He addressed the following statement to his Bible School students:

“Of course, you are not such wiseacres as to think or say that you can expound Scripture without assistance from the works of divines and learned men who have laboured before you in the field of exposition. If you are of that opinion, pray remain so, for you are not worth the trouble of conversion, and like a little coterie who think with you, would resent the attempt as an insult to your infallibility. It seems odd, that certain men who talk so much of what the Holy Spirit reveals to themselves, should think so little of what he has revealed to others. My chat this afternoon is not for these great originals, but for you who are content to learn of holy men, taught of God, and mighty in the Scriptures. It has been the fashion of late years to speak against the use of commentaries. If there were any fear that the expositions of Matthew Henry, Gill, Scott, and others, would be exalted into Christian Targums, we would join the chorus of objectors, but the existence or approach of such a danger we do not suspect. The temptations of our times lie rather in empty pretensions to novelty of sentiment, than in a slavish following of accepted guides. A respectable acquaintance with the opinions of the giants of the past, might have saved many an erratic thinker from wild interpretations and outrageous inferences. Usually, we have found the despisers of commentaries to be men who have no sort of acquaintance with them; in their case, it is the opposite of familiarity which has bred contempt” (Spurgeon, *Two Lectures Addressed to the Students of the Pastor’s College, Metropolitan Tabernacle*, <http://www.book-academy.co.uk/lectures/index.html>).

### **Some Tips for Using Commentaries Effectively**

1. The commentaries must be written by men who are sound in the faith. The use of commentaries written by men who are unsound in the faith will cause more harm than good. A large percentage of the commentaries published today fall into this category.

2. The commentary must be based on the right Hebrew and Greek texts. Most of the commentaries today are based upon unsound Bible texts and translations, such as the New International Version in English. The major Christian publishers are even republishing the old commentaries in modern Bible version editions. God did not inspire many different texts and to say that the preserved Word of God today is found scattered somehow throughout all of the translations makes no sense. Referring to the Bible version issue, a wise pastor once said, “Things that are different are not the same.” To say that two conflicting Bible versions

are both the preserved Word of God is confusion. The Christian must have one Bible authority, not ten conflicting ones. This is why we advocate staying with the old Received Greek text which shook the world to its foundation in the 1500s and broke the age-old shackles of Rome and which shined the gospel to the ends of the earth as it was translated into all of the world's major languages in the 1500s, 1600s, 1700s, and 1800s. In English, the most powerful and accurate translation of the Received Text is the King James Bible. It has proven itself for 400 years to be dependable and uniquely blessed of God. You will not go astray if you stay with this old Standard, but that cannot be said about the modern versions which use corrupted Greek manuscripts and which employ unsound methods of translation, such as dynamic equivalency.

Even many of the old commentaries, which contain some excellent thoughts, use the wrong Greek manuscripts. This is true, for example, of the notes in the Scofield Reference Bible, the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown's commentary, and William Newell's commentaries. Be careful about this. Though it is possible to use these commentaries to good advantage, the student must understand the textual issue and not be misled by the misguided comments on this subject.

3. The believer should not lean on commentaries. It is too easy to get into the habit of running to a commentary the moment we find something that we do not understand. This is not a good habit. Before going to a commentary, first try to make your own interpretation before the Lord. That way you will have a basis for analyzing what the commentator is saying.

4. Commentaries must be judged carefully by the Scriptures (Acts 17:11; 1 Cor. 14:29; 1 Thess. 5:21). No commentator is infallible. The wise Bible student will carefully test everything the commentator says by comparing it to the Scripture itself. Beware of the presumption of commentators who try to add to the Word of God.

- a. For example, Jamieson, Fausset, Brown comments on Genesis 4:3 *"And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD,"* as follows: "Hebrew, 'at the end of days,' probably on the Sabbath." In fact, there is nothing in the Hebrew to signify that it was the sabbath and the KJV translation is perfectly fine.
- b. In 1 Corinthians 1:16 Jamieson, Fausset, Brown comments: "It is likely that such 'households' included infants (Ac 16:33). The history of the

Church favors this view, as infant baptism was the usage from the earliest ages.” In fact, this is unscriptural nonsense. Though Paul baptized “the household of Stephanas” (1 Cor. 1:16) there is no mention of infants. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 16:15 we are told that this household addicted themselves to the ministry. This could not be said of infants. It is not legitimate to build doctrine on the silence of Scripture. Doctrine can only be established legitimately upon a clear “thus saith the Lord.” And what did the Lord Jesus teach: “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*” (Mk. 16:16). It is obvious that an infant is incapable of believing on Christ as his Lord and Saviour and is not therefore a proper candidate for baptism.

- c. In his commentary on Noah’s flood, Matthew Henry claims that Noah sent out the raven and dove on the sabbath. He says, “This intimates that it was done on the sabbath day, which, it should seem, Noah religiously observed in the ark.” In fact, Henry, one of my favorite commentators, was letting his imagination run wild, for there is not even a hint of such a thing in Scripture. These are examples of presumption on the part of the commentator.

#### 5. The student should know the theological position of the commentator.

It is important to know the theological position of the commentator, as this will usually be reflected in his notes.

For example, Adam Clarke, a Methodist, inserts infant baptism into his commentary on Matthew 28:19, even though there is no mention of such a thing in the Scripture: “But, certainly, no argument can be drawn from this concession against the baptism of children. When the Gentiles and Jews had received the faith and blessings of the gospel, it is natural enough to suppose they should wish to get their children incorporated with the visible Church of Christ; especially if, as many pious and learned men have believed, baptism succeeded to circumcision, which I think has never yet been disproved” (Adam Clarke’s *Commentary on the Bible*).

### **Some Helpful Whole Bible Commentaries**

*THE ANNOTATED BIBLE* by Arno Clemens Gaebelein (1861-1945), a fundamentalist Methodist, is a helpful commentary series that was published in

nine volumes in 1913 by Van Kempen Press of Wheaton, Illinois. It is dispensational, and we have found many of the comments to be thoughtful and helpful. The *Annotated Bible* is available electronically in the *Treasury of Rare Dispensational Commentaries* which is part of the 2009 edition of the *Fundamental Baptist CD Library*, available from Way of Life Literature.

*BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY*. This practical and helpful commentary on the Old and New Testaments was written by professors at Dallas Theological Seminary. It was edited by John Walvoord (1910-2002) and Roy Zuck.

*COMMENTARY ON THE HOLY BIBLE* by Matthew Poole (1624-1679). Poole was a Puritan. “He graduated from Emmanuel College in Cambridge in 1645, and succeeded the great Anthony Tuckney at St. Michael-le-Querne church. This was the only pastorate Poole would hold. A strict Presbyterian, he resigned his living rather than conform to the Act of Uniformity.” His commentary, which was originally called a “Synopsis,” required 10 years of earnest labor. He awoke at 3 or 4 a.m. and studied and wrote until the afternoon. His work was first written in Latin, and its translation into English was finished after his death. The three-volume set of commentaries by Poole is not as extensive as that of Matthew Henry, but the tone and approach is similar. It is a helpful, concise commentary on the entire Bible. Poole’s commentary was originally published in 1685, not long after the completion of the King James Bible. He ransacked the commentary material of his day, incorporating the best of it into his work. A lot of thought is packed into the concise language of this commentary. Charles Spurgeon wrote, “... having read Matthew Henry as I have, I would rather have none other commentary beside that of Matthew Poole.” Matthew Poole’s commentary on the Bible is available in the Swordsearcher Bible software program, which can be purchased from Way of Life Literature.

*EXPLORE THE BOOK* by J. (James) Sidlow Baxter (c. 1903-199?). This is a Bible survey course. Baxter was born in Australia and grew up in Lancashire, England. He was a Baptist. “He attended Spurgeon’s College in London and pastored in England and Scotland. He authored twenty-six books and ministered in churches, Bible conferences, and missionary centers throughout the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and around the world.” Baxter shows Christ through the Scriptures. He is dispensational. He defends the infallibility of the Scriptures against modernism (defending Genesis 1-11 as literal, Mosaic authorship of Pentateuch, Jonah swallowed by whale, etc.). His article “Our Bible: The Most Critical Issue” defended the infallibility of the Scriptures: “I have

said it many a time, and am surer of it than ever, that the life and death issue of Christianity is the inspiration and authority of the Bible.” He spends considerable time on the typology of the Old Testament. In his notes on Revelation, he hints at the possibility of a mid-tribulation Rapture, but he is not dogmatic on it and passes over it quickly. He treats the first part of the book of Acts as a renewed offer of the kingdom of God to Israel, which we strongly disagree with. He also presents a type of gap theory between Genesis 1:1-2, which we also disagree with. Originally this was a six-volume work. In 1960, Zondervan published a one-volume condensation.

*EXPOSITION OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS* by John Gill (1697-1771). Gill was a renowned British biblical scholar and Baptist pastor. For over 50 years he pastored the Particular Baptist Church of Horselydown, Southwark, London, the church that later moved its location and became known as the Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle of Charles Haddon Spurgeon fame. His knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew was equal to that of the greatest scholars of his day, and he diligently searched out and studied ancient materials relating to the Bible. The *Baptist Encyclopedia* observes that “no man in the eighteenth century was as well versed in the literature and customs of the ancient Jews as John Gill.” Spurgeon ranked Gill fifth among all commentators of the whole Bible and stated, “He is always worth consulting. ... for good, sound, massive, sober sense in commenting, who can excel Gill?” We personally overlook Gill’s complete capitulation to the most extreme TULIP Calvinism and glean from the riches of knowledge he passed on via his commentaries. The full set of Gill’s commentaries is published by *The Baptist Standard Bearer*, <http://www.standardbearer.com>. The Gill commentaries are also available in an electronic edition in the Swordsearcher Bible software package, which can be purchased from Way of Life Literature.

*EXPOSITION OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS* by Matthew Henry (1662-1714). This set of early 18th-century commentaries (first published in part in 1708-10) remains one of the most helpful in print, in my estimation. In some areas we disagree with Matthew Henry’s doctrinal position (e.g., his allegorical interpretation of prophecy and his Protestant universal church), but rarely do we regret having consulted him. Henry, a nonconformist Presbyterian pastor, was a master of biblical languages and a diligent Bible student who ransacked the old commentary material of his day to pass the meat along to us. He had a lovely gift for organizing and expressing his thoughts. He died before completing the full commentary, having finished his work only through the book of Acts. The



New Testament commentary from Romans to Revelation was completed by 14 other preachers of that day, all dissenters from the Church of England. There is now a New International Version edition of the Matthew Henry Commentary, and it is possible that the publishers will allow the KJV edition to go out of print at some point. We agree with Baptist pastor Charles Spurgeon's assessment of Matthew Henry: "You will find him to be glittering with metaphors, rich in analogies, overflowing with illustrations, superabundant in reflections. Every minister ought to read Matthew Henry entirely and carefully through once at least. You will acquire a vast store of sermons if you read with your note-book close at hand; and as for thoughts, they will swarm around you like twittering swallows around an old gable towards the close of autumn." Spurgeon notes that George Whitefield read Matthew Henry through four times during his life. All of this reminds us that men of God used to study the Bible much more than they do now.

Hendrickson Publishers has come out with an excellent one-volume edition of the Matthew Henry Commentary. It contains the entire text of the original multi-volume set, including chapter summaries and outlines. It omits the KJV text to conserve space, and it incorporates some helpful revisions: Roman numerals are changed to Arabic; Greek and Hebrew words are transliterated. The type style is smaller than that used in the multi-volume editions, but it is clear and legible. Hendrickson Publishers, P.O. Box 3473, Peabody, MA 01961, 508-532-6546.

Most of the Bible software packages, including Swordsearcher, include the unabridged Matthew Henry Commentary. There is also a software edition of an abridged edition of Matthew Henry, which is called the Matthew Henry Concise. It is TOO concise for my taste, though it can be helpful.

*EXPOSITORY OUTLINES ON THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT* by Warren Wiersbe (1929- ). Though Dr. Wiersbe is sadly committed to the New Evangelical philosophy, he is a gifted Bible commentator. His chapter-by-chapter *Expository Outlines* was completed decades ago during the 10 years (1961-1971) he pastored Calvary Baptist Church of Covington, Kentucky, before he became so thoroughly committed to the New Evangelical path he walks today (as pastor of Moody Church, associate editor of *Christianity Today*, working with Youth for Christ, board member of the National Religious Broadcasters, preaching at Willow Creek Community Church and at Billy Graham's "Cove" center in North Carolina, etc.). The edition of Wiersbe's notes published by Thomas Nelson is two volumes and is titled *Bible Commentary New Testament* and *Bible Commentary Old Testament*. The

Cook Communications edition is also two volumes and is titled *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old and New Testaments*. I have found the O.T. outlines to be particularly good. Wiersbe's Outlines are available for Logos Bible Software and the *PC Study Bible*. Wiersbe takes the position that the kingdom was offered again to Israel in the early part of the book of Acts, but we do not agree with this.

*GUIDE TO THE BIBLE* by Harold L. Willmington (c. 1940- ). This volume contains the heart of the Bible school course developed in the early 1970s by Willmington for Jerry Falwell's correspondence school. The last we knew, Willmington was still at Liberty University. We do not recommend this school, and it is sad to see men who should know better aligned with that type of compromise (hosting a Promise Keepers conference, promoting Billy Graham and his ecumenical evangelism, promoting the most radical charismatic ministries such as The Rock Church in Virginia Beach, promoting Christian rock, etc.). In his *Guide to the Bible*, which was first published in 1981, Willmington warned about "Christ-dishonoring methods used by some" and among these he listed "rock-and-roll sessions" (p. 50). Yet today he countenances this type of carnal methodology at Liberty and at churches associated with Liberty. Be that as it may, *Willmington's Guide to the Bible* is a helpful volume. It is divided into two major sections: A chapter-by-chapter commentary on or survey of the entire Bible, and a section on Bible doctrine. The doctrinal studies are thorough and practical (though I have not gone through them carefully enough to note my disagreements). Willmington's study on Genesis is particularly excellent. Willmington has published separate volumes entitled *New Testament Survey* and *Old Testament Survey*, but in our estimation, these are not as helpful as his original *Guide to the Bible*.

*HALLEY'S BIBLE HANDBOOK* by Henry Hampton Halley (1874-1965). He was a pastor and Bible lecturer who was ordained in 1898. Halley memorized entire books of the Bible and frequently quoted these in churches. He desired to see every Christian read the Bible daily, systematically, and fruitfully, and that is why he produced his Bible handbook. The first edition was a 16-page booklet, but it continued to grow until today it is 864 pages. It has gone through 24 editions. More than five million copies have been sold in many languages, including Spanish, French, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Thai, Russian, Greek, Tagalog, Cebuano, Indonesian, and Romanian. It contains a wide variety of helps in addition to the survey on the Old and New Testaments. These include maps and charts; archaeological notes; tables of weights, measures, and money;

outline of Bible history; and comments on reading and memorizing the Bible. Halley approaches Bible prophecy from a non-committal position, presenting the literal interpretation as well as other interpretations, but he leans toward the non-literal.

*HANDFULS ON PURPOSE* by James Smith and Robert Lee (1886-1978). This five-volume set contains more than 2,000 expository outlines covering the whole Bible. James Smith was a Presbyterian minister in the village of Coalsnaughton Scotland. Robert Lee was Secretary-Superintendent of Manchester City Mission, Manchester, England (not the Southern Baptist preacher Robert G. Lee). I have not found many outline sets to be helpful, but these are practical and useful.

*AN INTERPRETATION OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE* by Benajah Harvey Carroll (1843-1914). This 13-volume set of commentaries on the entire Bible by the famous Baptist preacher B.H. Carroll was edited and published by J.B. Carnfield between the years 1913-16. Carnfield, who was associated with Carroll for many years and who taught Bible for more than 30 years at the seminary level, testified that Carroll was “one of the greatest Bible scholars and exegetes living in the world today.” Carnfield wrote that in the General Introduction to the commentary on Genesis in 1913, the year before Carroll died. The *Wycliffe Biographical Dictionary* says Carroll “was a powerful preacher, keen debater, ready writer, widely-read historian.” Carroll pastored the First Baptist Church of Waco, Texas, from 1871 to 1899. In 1894 he became the principal of the Bible department at Baylor University and was professor of English Bible there from 1901 to 1910. He was influential in creating the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1910 and was president of Southwestern until his death in 1914. He published 33 books, including a volume on Baptist Doctrine and many influential pamphlets on such topics as “Communion from a Bible Standpoint” and “The Modern Social Dance.” Calvary Publications in Fort Worth, Texas (P.O. Box 181212, Ft. Worth, TX 76118, 817-281-4720) still carries 200 of Carroll's sermons in booklet format. *An Interpretation of the English Bible* is long out of print and is rare. It is not a verse-by-verse commentary, but it has many helpful thoughts for preachers and teachers. Sadly, Carroll approach Bible prophecy from the allegorical perspective. This set is available in an electronic edition entitled “The B.H. Carroll Collection” from Ages Software, Rio, Wisconsin, [www.ageslibrary.com](http://www.ageslibrary.com).

*IRONSIDE COMMENTARIES* by Henry A. Ironside (1878-1951). These commentaries are devotional, practical, and Christ-centered. Ironside worked

with the Salvation Army in his early Christian years, and he earnestly sought the “entire sanctification” experience promoted by the Army and the Methodists of that day. It was the turn of the century and a “holiness” fervor was sweeping across North America. The problem was that it was a false view of holiness that promised various degrees of sinless perfection. From this fervor the Pentecostal movement arose in the early part of the 20th century. Ironside became so discouraged by his failure to achieve an experience of sinlessness that he ended up in a hospital with an emotional and physical breakdown. There God began to teach him the truth of biblical justification and sanctification through some literature that he found, and he was led out of the confusion and doctrinal error of the holiness movement. He joined the Plymouth Brethren and conducted a long and fruitful ministry as a pastor and Bible teacher. His experiences were recorded in the book *Holiness: The False and the True*, which is posted at the Way of Life web site under the Charismatic section of the End Times Apostasy Online Database. I have found Ironside to be especially helpful in the Old Testament prophets. Like J. Vernon McGee, Ironside held a literal pre-millennial, pre-tribulational approach to Bible prophecy in contrast to most of the well-known commentators. There are individual volumes on Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel; and the Minor Prophets are covered in one volume. The Ironside Commentaries are available electronically in the *Treasury of Rare Dispensational Commentaries* which is part of the 2009 edition of the *Fundamental Baptist CD Library*, available from Way of Life Literature.

*JAMIESON-FAUSSET-BROWN COMPLETE COMMENTARY* by Robert Jamieson (1802-1880), Andrew Robert Fausset (1821-1910), and David Brown. First published in 1871, this three-volume set is frequently critical to the Received Text and the King James Bible, but it contains some helpful thoughts. Spurgeon said: “We consult it continually, and with growing interest. It contains so great a variety of information that if a man had no other exposition he would find himself at no great loss if he possessed this and used it diligently.” It must be noted that the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown’s commentary is prejudiced against a strict fundamentalist position on doctrine. For example, in Romans 14, this commentary warns against “setting up narrow standards of Christian fellowship” and claims that we should overlook “lesser differences.” In fact, Romans 14 is only referring to matters on which the Bible is silent and is not talking about doctrine that is based on Scripture. The Jamieson-Fausset-Brown commentary also teaches that the believer can lose his salvation in 1 Corinthians 3:17. Jamieson, Fausset, Brown is included in the *Swordsearcher* Bible software package, available from Way of Life Literature.

*KELLY (WILLIAM) COMMENTARIES* (1821-1906) were published on most books of the Bible in the late 1800s and republished in the first half of the 20th century. Kelly was born in Ireland and graduated from Trinity College, Dublin. He was converted at age 20 and joined the Plymouth Brethren and became one of their most able preachers. He wrote boldly against a wide variety of errors, including Popery. One of his last statements was this: "There are three things real -- the Cross, the enmity of the world, and the love of God." The commentaries are dispensational and fundamentalist, and we have found many of the comments to be thoughtful and helpful. The *Kelly* commentaries are available electronically in the *Treasury of Rare Dispensational Commentaries* which is part of the 2009 edition of the *Fundamental Baptist CD Library*, available from Way of Life Literature.

*NOTES ON THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT* by Albert Barnes (1798-1870), Frederic C. Cook (1810-1889), and James Murphy. There are 14 volumes in this invaluable set of commentaries. Barnes was a Presbyterian preacher and Bible expositor. He was brought to trial in 1835 for his rejection of the unscriptural doctrine of limited atonement. He advocated total abstinence of alcoholic beverages, was a soul winner, and promoted Sunday Schools. The Old and New Testament commentaries by Barnes are included in the *Swordsearcher* Bible software package, available from Way of Life Literature.

*THE NUMERICAL BIBLE* by Frederick William Grant (1834-1902) was first published the late 1800s. It is dispensational and fundamentalist, and we have found many of the comments to be thoughtful and helpful. Grant was a Brethren preacher who was born in England but ministered in Canada and the United States beginning at age 21. Like the Brethren in general and John Darby in particular, Grant accepted the critical Greek text and corrected the King James Bible. Not long before his death he pointed to the Bible and exclaimed to a friend: "Oh, the Book, the Book, the BOOK!" The *Numerical Bible* is available electronically in the *Treasury of Rare Dispensational Commentaries* which is part of the 2009 edition of the *Fundamental Baptist CD Library*, available from Way of Life Literature.

*SPURGEON'S EXPOSITORY ENCYCLOPEDIA* by C.H. Spurgeon. This is the only collection of Spurgeon's sermons classified by topic and alphabetically arranged. The 750 sermons are comprehensively indexed. There are also a number of other sets of Spurgeon's sermons with indexes. Spurgeon has been called "the prince of preachers." The main problem we have seen is his allegorical

interpretation of prophecy, but he is always worth reading.

*THRU THE BIBLE* by J. Vernon McGee (1904-1988). This five-volume set contains the messages preached by the late J. Vernon McGee on his Thru the Bible radio broadcasts. Though I was saddened by McGee's New Evangelical compromise in many areas, he always gladdened my heart with his warm, Christ-centered commentary on the Word of God. I particularly recommend his commentaries on the Old Testament prophets, because he maintained a literal pre-millennial, pre-tribulational approach in contrast to most of the well-known Bible commentators. It is not easy to find sound commentaries on the prophetic portions of Scripture. McGee's commentaries are available in a standalone electronic edition called *J. Vernon McGee Study Library CD-ROM*. They are also available as an e-book module for Logos Bible Software.

*UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE* BY David Sorenson (2004). Dr. Sorenson labored on this project for over ten years. He is a third-generation fundamental Baptist preacher who in preparation for this work has read the Bible through over 200 times. He is a pastor, church planter, soul winner, church builder, and a widely-read author whose writing style is eminently readable. The 11-volume hardbound commentary set is 8,368 pages long. It is a new and refreshing commentary on the Word of God with one purpose: to help a reader understand the Word of God. It endeavors to give the sense of any given passage of Scripture and help a reader to understand the reading (Neh. 8:8). *Understanding the Bible* was not written for scholars or academia but for pastors and Christian workers out on the firing line. Nevertheless, scholarship and accurate exposition of the Scriptures are intrinsic. Sunday School teachers, church staff, Christian school teachers, home schoolers, and any student of the Word of God will also find *Understanding the Bible* to be most helpful. Dr. Sorenson's commentaries are especially helpful because they are conservative, practical, and dispensational. There is also an electronic edition of this available. Northstar Ministries 1820 West Morgan Street Duluth, MN 55811, 218-726-0209, [davidsorenson@juno.com](mailto:davidsorenson@juno.com).

*THE UNFOLDING DRAMA OF REDEMPTION* by W. Graham Scroggie (1877-1958). Scroggie was educated at Spurgeon's Pastors' College in London and at the University of Edinburgh (D.D.). To his credit he was forced to leave two pastorates because of his opposition to theological modernism. He had a wide-ranging itinerant ministry throughout the English-speaking world and spent his final years as lecturer in English Bible at the Pastors' College. His survey of the

Bible was first published in three volumes. It has since been made available in a large one-volume edition. Scroggie traces the theme of redemption through the Bible, showing how each book and segment of the Bible fits into the whole. It is concise but rich in thought. As with many of the other commentators listed here, Scroggie was off base on Bible prophecy. His approach to Revelation, for example, is half-way between the literal and the allegorical approach. In my opinion, he ends up with little of profit from either system. He says, "If one makes a creed of literalism he may miss the enriching power of larger views." To the contrary, if one does not interpret Bible prophecy literally he has no firm basis by which to interpret it. *William Tyndale* was the translator of the first English Bible from the Greek and Hebrew in the early 1500s and was put to death by Rome for his noble work. He said: "Thou shalt understand, therefore, that the Scripture hath but one sense, which is the literal sense. And that literal sense is the root and ground of all, and the anchor that never faileth whereunto if thou cleave, thou canst never err or go out of the way. And if thou leave the literal sense, thou canst not but go out of the way. Neverthelater, the Scripture useth proverbs, similitudes, riddles, or allegories, as all other speeches do; but that which the proverbs, similitude, riddle, or allegory signifieth, is over the literal sense, which thou must seek out diligently..." (William Tyndale, cited by Charles Briggs, *General Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture*, pp. 456-57).

*UNGER'S COMMENTARY ON THE OLD TESTAMENT* by Merrill F. Unger (1909-80). Unger was professor of Old Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary for many years and this work is packed with helpful comments. One reviewer said, "The book will be most appreciated by those searching for a true grace-oriented scholar who glorifies the Lord, not himself, in his writings. Words cannot describe how inspirational this work is. Unger's pedigree is outstanding, his scholarship supreme and his style easy-going and understandable." It was published in two volumes by Moody Press in 1981 but it was out of print by the 1990s. A one-volume edition was printed by AMG Publishers in 2002.

*UNGER'S BIBLE HANDBOOK* by Merrill F. Unger (1909-80). Unger was professor of Old Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary for many years and this work is packed with helpful material. One reviewer said: "The New Unger's Bible Handbook is not a random collection of miscellaneous facts. It is carefully organized to form a commentary on God's Word, with an introduction, outline, and discussion of each book and its relationship to the complete biblical revelation. It gives a comprehensive yet concise introduction to the Bible, including its historical and archaeological background. It provides a history of

the formation and preservation of the Bible, an outline of the intertestamental period, pertinent statistics, a synopsis of church history, and a survey of other religions.”

## **THE SWORDSEARCHER BIBLE PROGRAM**

The Swordsearcher Bible Program contains many of our recommended study tools in one convenient package. Version 5.1.1 has 14 Bible texts; 10 dictionaries and encyclopedias (including the complete 1828 *WEBSTER’S DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE*, the complete multi-volume *INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BIBLE ENCYCLOPEDIA*, *Smith’s Bible Dictionary*, *American Tract Society Bible Dictionary*, *Fausett’s Bible Dictionary*, *Easton’s Bible Dictionary*, *Hitchcock Bible Dictionary*, *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, *Torrey’s Topical Textbook*); 24 commentaries (including Matthew Henry unabridged, Barnes--both Old and New Testament, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, Abbott, Burkitt, Adam Clarke, Keil and Delitzsch, John Gill’s *Exposition of the Bible*, Spurgeon’s *Treasury of David*, Lightfoot’s commentary on the Gospels, Newell’s commentary on Romans, and Larkin’s commentaries on Daniel and Revelation); 3 ancient pre-KJV English versions (WYCLIFFE, TYNDALE, AND THE BISHOPS); the ORIGINAL 1611 KJV; 2 Greek New Testaments (the Received Text and the Westcott and Hort); 4 foreign language versions (Spanish, German, French, Dutch); 4 topical Bible guides (*Thompson Chain Reference*, *Nave’s Topical Bible*, *Torrey’s New Topical Textbook*, *Condensed Biblical Cyclopedia*); other books; and over 360 maps, charts, and illustrations. The Swordsearcher Bible program is available from Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143 (toll free), [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org), <http://www.wayoflife.org/>. Swordsearcher modules for the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity* and *Things Hard to Be Understood: A Handbook of Biblical Difficulties* can also be obtained from Way of Life Literature.

## **A WARNING ABOUT MODERN BIBLE DICTIONARIES & ENCYCLOPEDIAS IN GENERAL**

We must sound a warning about the rationalism and incipient modernism that has infected most of the Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias. Consider the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (ISBE). It is widely respected as an evangelical Bible study tool, yet its statements on the Bible’s inspiration, canonization, and preservation are undependable and dangerous. Consider the following example:



“When the actual work of writing began no one who sent forth an epistle or framed a gospel had before him the definite purpose of contributing toward the formation of what we call ‘the Bible.’ ... They had no thought of creating a new sacred literature” (“Canon, New Testament,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*).

This is false doctrine. The apostles and prophets who authored the New Testament *knew* that they were writing under divine inspiration. They knew that the Lord Jesus Christ had promised that the Holy Spirit would guide them “into all truth” (Jn. 14:26; 16:13). Paul considered his writings authoritative (1 Cor. 14:37; Gal. 1:11-12; Eph. 3:4-5; Col. 1:25-26, 28; 1 Thess. 2:13; 3:6-14) and expected them to be circulated from church to church (Gal. 1:2; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27). Paul stated that Scripture was being written by the New Testament prophets under inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 16:25-26; 1 Cor. 2:6-16; Eph. 3:4-5). Peter said that the word being preached by the apostles was the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:25). He put the commandments of the apostles on the same level as those of the Old Testament prophets (2 Pet. 3:2). Peter called the Epistles of Paul Scripture and put them on the same level of authority as the Old Testament (2 Pet. 3:15-16). The book of Revelation was written as the prophetic Word of God (Rev. 1:3; 21:5; 22:18-19). Luke claimed perfect understanding of the gospel of Christ, which can only come by divine revelation (Luke 1:3). Paul quoted from the Gospel of Luke and called it Scripture, putting it on the same level as Deuteronomy (compare 1 Tim. 5:18; Deut. 25:4; Lk. 10:7). In warning the believers of false teachers, Jude refers to the “words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 17). John upheld apostolic teaching as the absolute standard of truth (1 John 4:6).

## **SHOULD I BUY BOOKS OR COMPUTER SOFTWARE?**

Computer Bible research tools are not necessarily for everyone. While it is true that Bible research can be more efficient on a computer than with books, this does not mean that such is always the case. The computer is only more efficient if it is readily available when you need it and if the Bible student can use it properly and in a godly manner. *Books well used are certainly more efficient than a computer not used! Books that produce godliness and wisdom are more to be desired than computer programs that distract from the same.*

If you have already incorporated the computer into your daily Bible study, you know by experience that computer Bible study software can be very efficient.

There are many Christians, though, who do not use a computer, who use it only occasionally, or who use it only for an occupation other than Bible study, and who are asking themselves the question, “In making further additions to my Bible study library, should I obtain books or should I turn to computer software?” Let me offer some tips that might help you answer that.

*First, if you do already have a computer, ask yourself if you are committed to using that computer for your daily Bible studies.* It is one thing to own a computer or to have access to one and even to use the computer for various other tasks; it is another thing to integrate the use of the computer into your personal daily Bible study routine. There are many people who own computers but who do not have ready access to that computer every day for their Bible study. Perhaps the computer is shared by several family members and is kept in a central location for that purpose. If that is the case, you might not be in the habit of using the computer for your daily Bible studies even though there might be a computer in your home. If such is the case, I would recommend that you continue to purchase and use books until you can obtain a computer which is used strictly by you for your own studies. For Bible software to be practical for you, it must be readily available every time you do Bible research. The computer must be handy, it must be turned on, and it must be mastered. Otherwise, you will tend not to use the computer for Bible study even if you own Bible search software because it will not be convenient. *Owning Bible study software is not the same as using Bible study software!*

*Second, if you do not already have a computer, ask yourself if you are truly committed to obtaining one, mastering it, keeping control of it, and then actually using it for Bible study.* Many computer programs are purchased which are not used. This is a waste of money. There is a real learning curve with computers. The personal computer is easier than ever to use, but to master its use still requires dedication and time. Children seem to take to them naturally, but that is not always the case with the “old fogies.” If you are contemplating purchasing a computer and incorporating it into your Bible study routine, I would encourage you to go for it. It is doubtful that you will regret it, IF YOU ARE COMMITTED TO GIVE ENOUGH TIME TO THE PROJECT TO GAIN A MASTERY OVER IT. Otherwise, you are probably wasting your time and money. As noted previously, books well used are certainly more efficient than a computer not used.

*Third, are you easily distracted from your study of God’s Word? Do you find*

yourself daydreaming a lot? Do you find your attention drawn away from the Lord by the thought of other things entering in? If so, you might be wise to avoid trying to incorporate the computer into your Bible studies. I have used a computer every day for 24 years and I am sold on its value, but I also have a ministry somewhat different from that of many preachers, because of the publishing and research aspects. I do not believe the computer has produced more godliness in the ministry and I do not believe it is necessary for the ministry. It can as easily be a distraction and a hindrance as it can be a help. I have seen preachers waste many hours simply playing with their computers. One can play with his computer even when he isn't using computer games! A man might say, "Look at all the time I save with my Bible search program." That is no doubt true, but the other side of that coin is to consider all the hours you might be wasting by merely playing around with your computer. Each man must answer these questions for himself. A man who is able to use his books without distraction to study God's Word in such a manner that he draws near to the Lord and increases in holiness and wisdom is far ahead of the man who owns and masters the most expensive Bible software but who frequently gets distracted from godly worship of Christ and serious meditation on God's Word by the bells and whistles of his software and of his computer system.

*It is also important that a man get the right software.* An important challenge was contained in a note I received from a brother in the Lord: "I love Logos [Bible software] but I would not suggest it to anyone unless they had excellent computer skills and the right computer. Also, I believe Logos is an excellent tool for the advanced student of the word but not for everybody. When I first purchased Logos, I spent all my time 'playing with the computer' rather than studying God's Word. I was ready to toss Logos. If I had to do it all over again, I wouldn't buy Logos even though I do realize its potential." In contrast to Logos, which has a higher learning curve, are programs like Parsons *Quick Verse*, the *Online Bible*, and *SwordSearcher*, which are easier to use.

I am saying that there is danger with technology. High technology does not equate to deep spirituality. It can be a servant, or it can be a master. Each man must make this determination for himself. I am merely saying that you don't need to be intimidated into putting away your books unless you are certain that is God's will for you. The greatest sermons ever preached and the greatest Bible study tools and commentaries ever made were produced with BOOKS WITHOUT COMPUTER ASSISTANCE!

If you can use a computer effectively and spiritually for your Bible study, that is great. If not, that is also great.

# Review Questions on Using Bible Study Tools

- 1-2. It is our opinion that a few tools \_\_\_\_\_ used are better than one hundred \_\_\_\_\_ used.
3. What Bible verse says we are to prove all things?
- 4-5. What are two things to beware of about study Bibles?
6. What was the doctrinal position of the editor of the Dake Reference Bible?
7. In the estimation of the author of this course, what is the most important Bible study tool ever published?
8. When searching for a particular verse, it is important to choose a word that is as \_\_\_\_\_ as possible.
- 9-13. Fill in the following blanks from the four steps in studying a word of the Bible using Strong's Concordance.
- Look up the meaning of the \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ word.
- See how the word is translated \_\_\_\_\_.
- Examine the immediate \_\_\_\_\_.
- See how the word is used in other \_\_\_\_\_.
14. To use the concordance to study topics, the Bible student must first determine what words are \_\_\_\_\_ with that topic.
15. What Bible study book contains 570,000 cross-references?
16. What is the most basic use for cross-references?
17. How does searching cross-references help to interpret a Bible passage?
- 18-21. What are four of the ways to use the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity*?
- 22-23. What are the first two tips we give for using commentaries effectively?

# STUDYING INDIVIDUAL PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE

**I**n writing the book *Things Hard to Be Understood A Handbook of Biblical Difficulties*, I used the following method to study passages of Scripture:

Example: Matthew 7:1-5

## **1. Define the terms.**

The plan to begin when studying a passage of Scripture is to define the meaning of the individual words. Following is a study on our sample text. We find the definitions in the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity*.

“mete” – To measure; to weigh (Ex. 16:18; Ps. 60:6; Is. 40:12).

“beam” – A large board or timber, used in the construction of houses and buildings. Beams supported walls, ceilings, and gates in city walls (1 Ki. 6:9,36; 2 Ch. 3:7; Ne. 2:8; 3:3,6; Song 1:17). The beam Jesus spoke of in Mt. 7:3-5 would be something like a rafter in a house!

“mote” – A splinter (Mt. 7:3-5; Lk. 6:41,42).

“hypocrite” – A pretender; a false professor; insincerity. The Greek word *hypokrites* referred to a play actor who wore a mask to represent an identity other than his own.

## **2. Read it repeatedly.**

As we have stated earlier in these studies, it is important to read a passage repeatedly to understand it. One hurried reading is not enough.

## **3. Understand the context.**

The context of Matthew 7:1-5 is Jesus’ condemnation of hypocrisy. The passage is widely misused by evangelicals and ecumenists to teach that we should not judge doctrine or sin. But the context makes the meaning clear. See verse 5, where Jesus plainly states what type of judgment He is condemning. Jesus is not condemning judgment in general; he is condemning one type of judgment, which is hypocritical judgment. Hypocrisy is a great problem, because of our

sinful nature. We condemn others for things we do ourselves. Children do it. Young people do it. Parents do it. Teachers do it. Preachers do it. Jesus' warning needs to be taken to heart.

#### **4. Compare Scripture with Scripture.**

Next we need to consider the cross-references and compare Scripture with Scripture. The *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* is one of the most helpful tools for this task.

Following are some of the cross-references to Matthew 7:1-5.

Luke 6:36-37 – In this companion passage, we see that Jesus is speaking of being merciful and forgiving.

Romans 2:1 – hypocrisy comes easily for the sinner. Parents often tell their children not to do the very things they are doing. People in poor countries commonly complain about the lack of justice and honesty in the government, but they are dishonest and unjust in their own lives and would do the same thing if they had the opportunity to be in a position of power.

Romans 14:3 – We are not to judge in matters of liberty where the Bible has not spoken.

By comparing Matthew 7 with other passages that teach about judgment, we learn that there are types of judgment that are commended by God. (1) Judgment of sinning church members (1 Cor. 5:3). (2) Judgment of self (1 Cor. 11:31). (3) Judgment of preaching (1 Cor. 14:29). (4) Judgment of doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3).

1 Corinthians 4:3-5 -- We must be careful about judging, because judgment is always imperfect in this world.

James 4:11 – Judgment of others must not be evil judgment, meaning judgment based on envy and hatred. Not all judgment is evil. Godly judgment based on the Bible and truth is not wrong and is not condemned in the Scriptures.

**Home Study Project:** Use this four-fold method to study a passage of your choice. Write out the results of each point, and, if you are studying this course with a class, hand your study in to the teacher.

# STUDYING THE TOPICS OF THE BIBLE

One of the important ways to study the Bible is topically or doctrinally. “Systematic Theology” sounds more sophisticated than topical Bible study, but it is the same thing. Systematic Theology is nothing more or less than analyzing what the Bible says on various subjects and then categorizing and organizing the teaching. During the first few years after I was converted, I developed my own topical studies by arranging Bible verses by subject in a large notebook that I kept for that purpose. I had separate pages for subjects such as Christ’s Deity, Sin, Heaven, Hell, Satan, Diligence, Anger, Holy Spirit, Demons, Resurrection, Baptism, Tongues, Death, etc.; and on the various pages of the notebook I copied the relevant verses by hand. It was very exciting to learn what the Bible had to say on so many momentous topics. I found that by the time I arrived at Bible school a year after I was saved I already had a good grounding in many Bible doctrines through this practice. My topical studies became more expansive and refined as the years passed, and eventually they were incorporated into the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity*.

If you are interested in other topical tools, many are available. I have probably 30 in my library. The *Thompson Chain Reference Bible* has an extensive topical study system. There is a topical system built into the *Scofield Reference Bible*. Dugan publishes an excellent topical study Bible. Two of the stand-alone topical tools that I have found helpful are the *Nave’s Topical Bible* (Hendrickson Publishers, P.O. Box 3473, Peabody, MA 01961) and the *New Topical Textbook* (Sword of the Lord, P.O. Box 1099, Murfreesboro, TN 37133), each of which contains more than 20,000 topics and sub-topics. The Nave’s and the Thompson Chain topics are included in the *Swordsearcher* Bible software package, which is available from Way of Life Literature.

## ***How to Study the Bible Topically***

1. Go through the Bible and write down all of the important verses that pertain to the topic, leaving room after each verse to write down lessons. You can use the *Way of Life Encyclopedia* to find the most important verses on a topic and then do your own study.

If you are using a concordance for topical study, you must first determine what words are associated with that topic. For example, if you are studying SATAN,



you will need to look up not only *Satan*, but also *devil*, *devils*, *god of this world*, *prince of the power of the air*, *Beelzebub*, *serpent*, *dragon*, etc.

2. Define all of the terms that are used for that topic.

3. Write down the main lessons from each verse.

4. Organize the lessons into an outline.

*Following is an example of a topical study:*

## KILLING, MURDER

Gen. 4:8-12

8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

9 And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

11 And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

In this passage, I don't see any words that we need to look up. The King James Bible is not as difficult to understand as some would have us think. Following are two of the lessons we learn about killing:

- Murder was in the heart of man from the beginning after he fell.
- God has hated and judged murder from the beginning.

Gen. 9:3-6

3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

4 But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

5 And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

Again, I don't see any words that we need to look up. Following are some of the lessons we learn from this passage about killing:

- God says that murder must be punished by capital punishment.
- Murder is very evil because of what man is.
- To kill an animal is not murder.

Exodus 20:13  
Thou shalt not kill.

Again, I don't see any words that we need to look up. Following is the main lesson we learn about killing:

- God forbids killing in cold blood. By comparing this verse with the following verses, we see that some kinds of killing are allowed.

Exodus 22:2-3

2 If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him.

3 If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him; for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.

Again, I don't see any words that we need to look up. Following is the main lesson we learn from this passage about killing:

- It is not murder to kill a thief if he is breaking into your house.

Num. 35:16-31

16 And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death.

17 And if he smite him with throwing a stone, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death.

18 Or if he smite him with an hand weapon of wood, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death.

19 The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him.

20 But if he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait, that he die;

21 Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote him shall surely be put to death; for he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him.

22 But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him any thing without laying of wait,

23 Or with any stone, wherewith a man may die, seeing him not, and cast it upon him, that he die, and was not his enemy, neither sought his harm:

24 Then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments:

25 And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil.

26 But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled;

27 And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood:

28 Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest: but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession.

29 So these things shall be for a statute of judgment unto you throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

30 Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die.

31 Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death.

32 And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest.

33 So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.

34 Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.

There are some words and phrases that the Bible student might need to look up. These are “revenger of blood” in verse 19, “laying of wait” in verse 20, “enmity” in verse 21, and “city of refuge” in verse 25. Once you have learned the definition of these, it is time to list the lessons from this passage:

- Not all killing is murder. It is not murder to kill a person accidentally (vv. 22-23).
- The case is to be tried to determine the cause of death (v. 24).
- In Israel, the revenger of blood had the authority to kill a murderer. This was a relative or friend of the person who was killed (v. 24-25).
- There was a place of safety for the one who killed accidentally (v. 25).
- Murder is to be punished by taking the murderer’s life (v. 30).
- Two witnesses were required (v. 30).
- No other punishment was allowed (v. 31).
- Murder is a very serious crime and it pollutes the land (vv. 33-34).

Matt. 15:18-20

18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

20 These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

Again, I don’t see any words that we need to look up. Following is the main lesson we learn from this passage about killing:

- Murder is a problem of the sinful heart of man. It is not a problem caused by his environment, by poverty, etc.

Rom. 13:1-4

1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Again, I don't see any words that we need to look up. Following is a major lesson that we learn from this passage:

- In this present dispensation, God has given the authority to civil governments to put evildoers to death.

Step #4: Organize and Summarize the Lessons

#### *Bible Lessons about Murder and Killing*

(1) Murder is a horrible crime, and the Bible says that the man who takes a life is to forfeit his own (Gen. 9:6).

(2) Killing and murder are not always the same. There are at least three occasions in the Bible when killing is not murder: *Accidental death*. It is not murder to kill someone accidentally (Num. 35:20-23). *Self Defense*. It is not murder to defend oneself or one's loved ones and property (Ex. 22:2-3). *Capital punishment*. It is not murder to put criminals to death for heinous crimes (Rom. 13:1-4).

(3) The avenger of death in O.T. times was a relative or friend who put the murderer to death (Deut. 19:11-13). Today it is the government that puts the murderer to death (Rom. 13).

(4) Murder defiles the land and requires capital punishment (Num. 35:30-34).

(5) Murder is a problem of the heart (Mat. 15:18-20).

### **CONCLUSION**

The topical method of study is very important and can be of continual value in one's Christian life.

1. Topical study is the best method to find the mind of God on any subject. The Bible contains the very mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). What a wonderful and amazing and valuable thing the Bible is! Even though we cannot presently see God or talk to Him face to face, we have His thoughts and words. To know what

God thinks about something, all we have to do is make the effort to study what the Bible says. Evangelist R.A. Torrey commented: “It may be important to know what the great men have to say on important subjects; it is far more important to know what God has to say on these subjects. It is important also to know *all* that God has to say. A great many people know a part of what God has to say—and usually a very small part—and so their ideas are very imperfect and one-sided. If they only knew all God had to say on the subject, it would be far better for them and for their friends. The only way to know all God has to say on any subject is to go through the Bible on that subject.”

2. Topical study is not only helpful for studying larger topics of the Bible but also smaller ones. This is one of the most important ways to find out the will of God for your life. For example, if you have a question about dancing, all you have to do is study the topic of dancing in the Bible. If you are struggling with some issue in your daily life, it is so helpful to take the time to study the matter in the Bible, whether it be prayer, friendship, anger, lust, envy, gossip, patience, money, lying, love, suffering, fear, fatherhood, motherhood, child training, laziness, employment, forgiveness, etc. Again, this is where the *Way of Life Encyclopedia* comes in handy, as its system of cross-references can help you find all of the Bible’s teaching on practically any topic.

3. The topical study method is also very helpful if you need to check out a certain teaching. God exhorts us to test all preaching and teaching with His Word (Acts 17:11; 1 Cor. 14:29; 1 Thess. 5:21). If a question arises about some teaching that we have heard, it is important to go to the Scriptures and study the issue for ourselves. When I was a new Christian, I obtained a book by a Seventh-day Adventist and became confused by some of the teaching. The writer said, for instance, that when people die they don’t go to Heaven or Hell but merely sleep in the grave until the resurrection. After studying the subject of death in the Bible itself I found that the man was wrong. The same was true for the sabbath and for dietary matters and many other things. I have used the topical study method to analyze Pentecostal teachings, such as tongues and healing and “holy laughter” and spirit slaying. And I have used it in hundreds of other ways to test various doctrines. The Devil will confront you with many false teachings. It is crucial to know how to test them with God’s Word.

**Home Study Project:** Choose any subject you please from the Bible and follow these guidelines in studying it.

# STUDYING THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

**T**he study of individual books of the Bible is very important. There are many great benefits from this method of study. Following are two of these:

*First, studying individual books of the Bible helps you to understand the Bible as a whole.* The Bible is a library of 66 books and it is not possible to understand the Bible as a whole until we understand the individual books.

*Second, studying individual books of the Bible helps you interpret the Bible in context.* Individual verses or passages can only be rightly interpreted in the context of the book in which they are contained.

To study a book of the Bible the student needs to take the following steps:

## **1. Get a thorough grasp of the entire message of the book.**

To gain a good grasp of the message of a book, you need to read it repeatedly and concentrate as you read. Aim to understand the main purpose of the book and its main lessons. Look for key words or repeated statements or main events and characters. For example, if you read the book of Judges, clearly mark the names of the various judges, because that is how the book is naturally divided.

## **2. Make an introduction to the book.**

An important part of analyzing a book of the Bible is to make an introduction by writing down the answers to the following questions:

- a. Who wrote the book?
- b. What do I know about the author?
- c. What were his circumstances when he wrote?
- d. Who is he writing to?
- e. When did he write?
- f. Why did he write the book?

g. What is the one central idea of the book?

h. What are the main thoughts of the book?

The attempt to write your own introduction to books of the Bible will be more valuable to you than anything you can get from someone else. Sometimes the answers to these questions are not available, but by attempting to answer them the Bible student gains a better understanding of the book. Sometimes these questions can be answered by consulting other parts of Scripture. For example, to obtain the background of Paul's Epistles, one must oftentimes go to the book of Acts.

### **3. Outline the book.**

Next, you need to divide the book into main sections and then note the subsections.

*THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO DIVIDE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.*

#### *By Main Characters*

You can divide Genesis this way: Adam (Gen. 1-3), Abel (Gen. 4), Enoch (Gen. 5), Noah (Gen. 6-9), Nimrod (Gen. 10-11), Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 12-35), Esau (Gen. 36), and Joseph (Gen. 37-50).

#### *By Chronology*

The book of Exodus can be divided chronologically: Israel in servitude in Egypt (Ex. 1), Moses' birth and early life (Ex. 2), Moses' call (Ex. 3-4), God's judgments on Egypt (Ex. 5-11), Israel leaves Egypt (Ex. 12-13), the Egyptian army drowned in the Red Sea (Ex. 14-15), Israel in the wilderness of sin (Ex. 16), Israel at Rephidim (Ex. 17), Moses visited by Jethro (Ex. 18), Israel at Mt. Sinai — the giving of the Law (Ex. 19--40).

The books of Samuel and Kings are easily divided by chronology, as well as by main characters.

#### *By Main Events*

You can divide the book of Jonah by main events: Jonah is called and flees from God (Jonah 1), Jonah repents (Jonah 2), Jonah preaches to Ninevah (Jonah 3), Jonah is displeased when Ninevah repents (Jonah 4).

The book of Esther divides easily by main events: Queen Vashti is rejected (Esther 1); Queen Esther is chosen (Esther 2); Haman plots to destroy the Jews (Esther 3); Mordecai and Esther seek to turn away the plot (Esther 4-5); Mordecai exalted by the king (Esther 6); Haman is hung on his own gallows (Esther 7); the Jews are victorious (Esther 8).

#### *By the Story Line*

The book of Job divides easily by story line. Job's troubles (Job 1-3); Job's conversations with his friends (Job 4-37); Job's confrontation with God (Job 38-41); Job's repentance and restoration (Job 42).

#### *By Subject*

The New Testament Epistles divide well by subject. For example, Ephesians is divided into two major parts: the Christian's position (Eph. 1-3); the Christian's practice (Eph. 4-6).

The book of Romans can be divided similarly: The way of salvation (Rom. 1-5); Christian living (Rom. 6-8); a parenthesis that answers the question: what about Israel? (Rom. 9-11); Christian living continued (Rom. 12-16).

#### *By Theme*

The book of Titus divides naturally by its main theme, which is setting up and organizing a church (1:5). We thus divide the book into the following categories of organizing churches: Selecting elders (Titus 1); training the church members (Titus 2:1-3:8); protecting the church from false teachers (Titus 3:8-11); encouraging the church to give (Titus 3:12-14).

#### *By Key Phrases*

The book of James is not easy to divide. At first look, it appears to be merely a disjointed group of exhortations. I have found that one way to divide James is by the repeated phrase "my brethren" (1:2, 16; 2:1; etc.) and by its theme of "worldliness" (4:4):

Worldliness produces double mindedness (1:2-15). Solution 1:16-27.

Worldliness produces partiality, respect of persons (2:1-4). Solution 2:5-13.

Worldliness produces hypocrisy (2:14-23). Solution 2:24-26.

Worldliness is evidenced by an uncontrolled tongue (3:1-9). Solution 3:10-18.

Worldliness is evidenced by unlawful lusts (4:1-5). Solution 4:6-10



Worldliness is evidenced by evil speaking (4:11). Solution 4:12.

Worldliness is evidenced by self-confidence, pride, and greed (4:13 - 5:6).  
Solution 5:7-11.

Concluding thoughts (5:12-20).

#### **4. Study each section of the book verse by verse.**

At this point, we can move along to a more minute study of the book by analyzing each passage and each verse and even each word. To do this we use the methods already mentioned--word studies and passage studies, and the tools already mentioned--concordance, cross-references, dictionary, and commentary.

**Home Study Project:** Choose one book of the Bible and analyze it with this method, at least using the first three points.

# STUDYING THE PEOPLE OF THE BIBLE

**G**od has recorded the lives of hundreds of people in the Scriptures, and these are given for our instruction (1 Cor. 10:11). Character studies are very challenging, convicting, and enlightening. The Bible student will be amazed at how much he can learn from the lives of Bible characters, even when they are mentioned only briefly in the pages of Scripture.

The following is a method for studying the people of the Bible:

1. Use a concordance or topical study book or Bible dictionary and find all of the passages dealing with that person.

a. *Be careful to distinguish between various people with the same name.* For example, there are many people named Simon and Mary and James. There are at least two men named Goliath, one killed by David (1 Sam. 17), and one killed by Elhanan (2 Sam. 21:19).

b. *Many people in the Bible are called by different names.* Peter is also called Simon, Cephas, and Simeon. You can find the different names by consulting the parallel references in the *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* and by using a Bible dictionary.

2. Read these passages repeatedly.

3. Analyze the person's life by asking the following questions:

a. What are other names for this person?

b. What are the meanings of his or her names?

c. What do I know about the background of his or her life and times?

d. What do I know about the person's family?

e. What details does the Bible give about his or her birth?

f. What do I know about the person's youth?

g. What do I know about the person's salvation?

h. What do I know about the person's call of God?

- i. What are the major events of the person's life?
- j. What are the major character traits of this person, good and bad?
- k. What people most influenced the persons' life?
- l. What influence did this person have on those around him?
- m. What is the one main thought that summarizes this person's life?
- n. What are some of the lessons from the person's life?

**EXAMPLE: *Enoch***

References: Gen. 5:18-24; 1 Chron. 1:3; Lk. 3:37; Heb. 11:5; Jude 14

Meaning of his name: Enoch means "initiated"

Other Names: What are other names for this person? The Hebrew name for Enoch, *Chanowk*, is also translated "Hanoch" and is used for the Enoch of Genesis one time, in 1 Chron. 1:3. Enoch and Hanoch are also the names of other men: a son of Cain (Gen. 4:17-18), a son of Reuben (Ex. 6:14; Nu. 26:5; 1 Chron. 5:3), and a son of Midian (1 Chron. 1:33).

Background: Enoch lived only seven generations after Adam's fall. He was in the godly lineage of Seth, who was born in the place of the murdered Abel (Gen. 4:25-26). Enoch lived not long before the flood and the world was filled with wickedness. Enoch was a prophet of God (Jude 14).

Family: Enoch's son, Methuselah, was the oldest man in the Bible (Gen. 5:25-27).

Birth: There is nothing outstanding recorded about Enoch's birth.

Youth: The Bible doesn't say anything about Enoch's youth, but Adam was still alive for the first 387 years of Enoch's life. Thus Enoch doubtless knew his famous (or infamous!) great grandparents, Adam and Eve, and could have heard from their own lips the story of the fall, of the promised seed, of the coats made by God, and of Abel's offering.

Salvation: The Bible says Enoch walked with God. This tells us that Enoch was a saved man, but we are not told exactly how or when he was saved. We do know from Hebrews that he believed in God.

Call of God: We are not told about Enoch's call to be a prophet.

Major Events: Enoch was translated to Heaven without dying.

Character Traits: (1) He walked with God. (2) He pleased God (Heb. 11:5). (3) He preached the Word of God (Jude 14).

People by Whom He Was Influenced: We are not told directly who might have influenced Enoch. It is possible, though, that he was influenced by Adam himself, who lived during the first 387 years of his life.

People Who Were Influenced by Him: Enoch preached the Word of God and thus doubtless influenced many in his generation, but we do not know exactly who they were. His testimony and preaching probably influenced Noah, as Enoch was taken to Heaven only 69 years before Noah was born. Since his translation, Enoch has influenced multitudes by his example of walking with God as recorded in the Bible.

Main Thought: Enoch was a man who walked with God in a wicked generation, and he did not have to die.

Major Lessons from Enoch's Life:

- a. Men can have faith in God in the midst of the wickedest environment.
- b. Men in those days had great light. Abel knew about God's sacrifice (Gen. 4). Enoch knew about the second coming of Christ (Jude 14).
- c. God's means of witnessing to men is through preaching (Jude 14).
- d. There have always been prophets of God in the world; thus men are without excuse for not believing in the true God.
- e. The first and most important thing about pleasing God is simply walking with Him.

**Home Study Project**: Choose one person out of the Bible and study that person's life through this method.

**GUIDE FOR STUDYING PEOPLE OF THE BIBLE**

The Person \_\_\_\_\_

What are the main Scripture References pertaining to the life of this person?

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_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What are other names for this person?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What are the meanings of his or her names?

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

What do I know about the background of his or her life and times?

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What details does the Bible give about his or her birth?

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What do I know about the person’s family?

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What do I know about the person’s youth?

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What do I know about the person’s salvation?

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What do I know about the person’s call of God?

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What are the major events of the person’s life?

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What are the major character traits of this person, good and bad?

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What people most influenced the person's life?

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What influence did this person have on those around him?

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# STUDYING THE PARABLES OF THE BIBLE

A good definition of a Bible parable was given by Dr. Bruce Lackey: “A parable is a comparison between material and spiritual truth, designed to teach doctrine and obedience. It may be given in the form of a narrative, a proverb, or a reference to an event or institution.”

“Parable” means to lay something alongside another. It means to compare two things. The Greek word translated parable (*parabole*) is also translated “comparison” (Mark 4:30) and “figure” (Heb. 9:9). See also Matthew 13:24, 35, etc. “The kingdom of heaven is *likened unto*...”

We also see this in the Old Testament parables. In these, the prophets compare many things:

Numbers 23:18-24 -- Israel is compared to a unicorn and lion  
Psalm 49:4, 12, 20 -- man is compared to beasts that perish  
Ezekiel 17:2, 12 -- the king of Babylon is compared to an eagle  
Ezekiel 20:45-49 -- God’s judgment of Israel is compared to a fire  
Ezekiel 24:3 ff -- Jerusalem is compared to a pot of boiling water

Some parables are proverbs. The Greek word *parabole* is also translated “proverb” in (Luke 4:23). Two examples of New Testament proverbs are Luke 6:39 and Mark 3:23-27.

The Bible parable has been called “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.”

## Why did Jesus teach parables?

The Lord Jesus taught in parables to hide truth from those who would not believe Him (Mat. 13:10-17). A parable requires some consideration. Those who don’t care about the truth will not go to the trouble to understand a parable and will also stumble at its meaning, because they will trust their own thinking rather than seek God’s help. On the other hand, the one who wants to know the truth will humbly and persistently seek out the meaning. The Lord’s disciples asked Jesus to explain the parables (Mat. 13:36).

See Proverbs 26:7 — “*The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable in the*

*mouth of fools.” As the lame person is unable to walk correctly or do many things properly, so the foolish person cannot understand parables properly.*

## **The interpretation of parables**

*The primary law of interpreting parables is as follows: A parable is given to teach ONE central truth. “The safest way to handle a parable is to search out the leading thought or principle idea round which as center the subordinate parts must group themselves” (Herbert Lockyer). To attempt to make extended application of each detail of a parable can produce false interpretations. The details of the parable are important, but they only contribute to the primary meaning of the overall parable.*

### ***Five Rules for Understanding the Main Lesson of a Parable***

#### 1. Look for the plain interpretation of the parable.

Often the parables are plainly interpreted in the immediate passage. A number of the parables of our Lord were interpreted by Himself (Mat. 13:3-9; 18-23; 13:33-43; Luke 7:41-42, 47; 12:16-23; 18:1-8; 9-14; 19:11-27). In these instances, there can be no misunderstanding of the meaning of the parable.

#### 2. Study the context of the parable.

A parable is not given in isolation. The context before or after the parable will help determine its main point.

For example, the context of the parables in Luke 15:3-32 is found in verses 1-2. The self-righteous Pharisees criticized Jesus for receiving sinners, and Christ replied by giving these parables to teach God’s great love for the same.

The context of the parable of the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18:23-35 is Peter’s question to the Lord about forgiveness (Mt. 18:21-22).

The context of the parable of the barren fig tree in Luke 13:6-9 is Christ’s demand for repentance. See verses 1-5. In this parable, Christ was teaching that repentance has evidence in one’s life. Compare Matthew 3:7-8.

The context of the parables in Matthew 25 is found in the previous chapter (Mt. 24:42-46), which deals with the return of Christ. The basic interpretation of the parables in Matthew 25, then, is that God’s people need to be ready and watching for Christ’s return.

### 3. Study the parable in all corresponding passages.

Many of the parables are repeated in two or more of the Gospels. It is very helpful to compare these accounts because more information will be found by this means.

Comparing the Parable of the Sower — Matthew 13:18-23 with Mark 4:14-20 and Luke 8:11-15.

To Matthew 13:19, Mark adds “*Satan cometh immediately*” (Mk. 4:15) and Luke adds “*lest they should believe and be saved*” (Lk. 8:12).

To Matthew 13:22, Mark adds “*and lusts of other things entering in*” (Mk. 4:19) and Luke adds “*and pleasures of this life*” (Lk. 8:14).

To Matthew 13:23, Luke adds “*in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience*” (Lk. 8:15).

### 4. Study the parable’s cultural background.

The parable of the Wedding Feast in Matthew 22:1-14 can be better understood in light of the culture. The person who attended the wedding without the proper garment was showing great disrespect toward the king by refusing to wear the garment that had been provided and perhaps by thinking that he was special and thus did not need such a garment. The Barnes commentary explains: “Anciently, kings and princes were accustomed to make presents of changes of raiment to their friends and favourites, to refuse to receive which was an expression of highest contempt. It was, of course, expected that such garments would be worn when they came into the presence of the benefactor. The garments worn on festival occasions were chiefly long white robes; and *it was the custom of the person who made the feast to prepare such robes to be worn by the guests. This renders the conduct of this man more inexcusable. He came in his common ordinary dress, as he was taken from the highway; and though he had not a garment of his own suitable for the occasion, yet one had been provided for him, if he had applied for it. His not doing it was expressive of the highest disrespect for the king.* This beautifully represents the conduct of the hypocrite in the church. A garment of salvation might be his, wrought by the hands of the Saviour, and dyed in his blood. But the hypocrite chooses the filthy rags of his own righteousness, and thus offers the highest contempt for that provided in the gospel. He is to blame, not for being invited; not for coming, if he would come—

for he is freely invited; but for offering the highest contempt to the King of Zion, in presenting himself with all his filth and rags, and in refusing to be saved in the way provided in the gospel.”

5. Make certain that the interpretation does not contradict sound doctrine taught in other parts of Scripture.

Parables illustrate doctrine; they do not formulate it. Parables must not be made the first source of doctrine.

The parable of the Wheat and Tares (Mat. 13:24-30) has been incorrectly interpreted as teaching that God does not want the Christian to exercise judgment against sin and error. That this is not the meaning Christ intended is obvious by the many commands in the New Testament regarding church discipline and separation from error. *In the parable of the Wheat and Tares Christ was describing the conditions that will exist in the world during His absence in Heaven.* He plainly stated this in verse 38, where He says that the field is the world, not the churches. The kingdom of God will assume a mystery form during the period of the church age, meaning a form not revealed in O.T. prophecy (Mat. 13:11). The term *mystery* means the revelation of truth hidden in prior ages. It refers to N.T. truth that was hidden from the O.T. prophets. The O.T. describes the coming kingdom of God on earth, but it does not foresee this present interlude between the first and second comings of Christ, this present age during which Christ is calling out a people for His name among all nations. In the parables in Matthew 13, the Lord taught that there will be increasing apostasy and wickedness during the course of the church age. The kingdom of Heaven in its mystery form is all of professing Christianity, lost and saved, apostate and true. It includes the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant denominations, the cults, as well as sound biblical congregations. When Jesus says that the tares must not be rooted out until the end of the age, He is referring to the fact that apostasy cannot be destroyed from the world until that time. The churches are not to put heretics to death or burn down the apostate cathedrals! God will take care of error as far as rooting it out of His kingdom when Christ returns in power and glory. To interpret the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares as applying to the N.T. church is a great error and contradicts the rest of Scripture.

The parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven in Matthew 13:31-33 are interpreted by amillennialists as the growth of the true Church from a small

beginning until it becomes great in the world. The mustard seed and the leaven are thought to be the gospel. To the contrary, the Bible teaches us that leaven is a picture of sin and false teaching (1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9). Nowhere else in Scripture is leaven used to depict something that is right and true. The first mention of leaven is in Exodus 12:15 in the feast of unleavened bread that followed the Passover. All leaven was to be put out of the Hebrew homes, because leaven signified evil. In the parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven in Matthew 13 Christ was actually speaking of the growth of apostasy. Christ was referring to unnatural growth, as depicted by the mustard seed that becomes a tree. The fowls are devils. Compare Matthew 13:4 and Revelation 18:2.

The parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30 is used by Arminians to teach that a believer can lose his salvation. The servant who hid his talent in the earth is said to be a true believer, who is rejected by Christ and cast into Hell. Yet, the parable itself, and a comparison with other Scripture passages, teaches us that this man was never truly saved. (1) The man's concept of the Lord shows that he is a lost man. He considered the Lord "*an hard man*" who reaped where He had not sown. It is obvious that he did not know the blessed Lord Jesus Christ! The Lord is exactly the opposite of how this man described Him. He is gracious, merciful, patient, meek, and lowly in heart; He gives us MUCH more than we deserve. In fact, we have nothing that He has not first given to us. The fact that this man is called a servant does not mean necessarily that he is saved. The Jews are called the Lord's servants, but they were not all saved (Isa. 43:10). (2) The man's destiny also shows that he is a lost man. He is cast into outer darkness, which is a description of Hell (2 Peter 2:17; Jude 13). Nowhere in Scripture is a child of God said to be in outer darkness. The Bible says believers are children of light and not of darkness (1 Thess. 5:5). Further, the weeping and gnashing of teeth are associated with eternal damnation and Hell (Matt. 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; Luke 13:28).

## **The Rich Man and Lazarus**

Some claim that the story in Luke 16:19-31 about the rich man in Hell is a parable. This is usually claimed by those who deny that Hell is a place of eternal torment or by those who believe in Soul Sleep.

For the following reasons we know that this is not a parable:

1. Christ used the proper names of two people, Lazarus and Abraham, and He never did this in parables.

2. The description of Hell in this passage corresponds with Christ's descriptions in other passages (Mk. 9:44, 46, 48).

3. There is no indication that this is a parable. It is not called a parable and has none of the key expressions associated with true parables (such as “like,” “as,” or “like unto.”

Of course, even if this were a parable it would still teach literal truth!

## **Old Testament Parables**

1. Balaam's parables (Nu. 23:7, 18; 24:3, 15, 20, 21, 23)
2. Jotham's (Jud 9:7-15)
3. Nathan's (2 Sa. 12:1-7)
4. The woman of Tekoa's (2 Sam. 14:5-17)
5. The unnamed prophet's (1 Ki. 20:35-43)
6. Joash's (2 Ki. 14:9; 2 Ch. 25:18)
7. Job's (Job 27:1; 29:1)
8. The Psalmist's (Ps. 49:4-20; Ps. 78)
9. The prophets (Is. 5:1-7; Jer. 13:1-7; Eze. 17:2-10; 19:2-3; 24:3; Mi. 2:4; Hab. 2:6)

## **Christ's Parables**

The Seed (Mk. 4:26-29)

The Household Watching (Mk. 13:34-36)

Candle under the Bushel (Mt. 5:15; Mk. 4:21; Lk. 8:16)

House Built on Rock (Mt. 7:24; Lk. 6:48)

New Cloth on old Garment (Mt. 9:16; Mk. 2:21; Lk. 5:36)

New Wine in Old Bottles (Mt. 9:17; Mk. 2:22; Lk. 5:37-38)

Sower (Mt. 13:1-23; Mk. 4:1-20; Lk. 8:4-15)

Tares (Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43)

Mustard Seed (Mt. 13:31-32; Mk. 4:30-32; Lk. 13:18-19)

Leaven (Mt. 13:33; Lk. 13:20-21)

Hidden Treasure (Mt. 13:44)

Costly Pearl (Mt. 13:45-46)

Dragnet (Mt. 13:47-50)

Lost Sheep (Mt. 18:12-13; Lk. 15:1-7)  
Wicked Servant (Mt. 18:21-35)  
Laborers in the Vineyard (Mt. 20:1-16)  
Two Sons (Mt. 21:28-32)  
Vineyard and Husbandmen (Mt. 21:33-46; Mk. 12:1-12; Lk. 20:9-19)  
Wedding Feast (Mt. 22:1-14)  
Ten Virgins (Mt. 25:1-13)  
Talents (Mt. 25:14-30)  
Sheep and Goats (Mt. 25:31-46)  
Two Debtors (Lk. 7:36-50)  
Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25-37)  
Friend at Midnight (Lk. 11:5-8)  
Rich Fool (Lk. 12:16-21)  
The Servants Watching (Lk. 12:35-40)  
Steward on Trial (Lk. 12:42-48)  
Barren Fig Tree (Lk. 13:6-9)  
Wedding Guest (Lk. 14:7-11)  
Great Supper (Lk. 14:15-24)  
Counting the Cost (Lk. 14:25-35)  
The Lost Coin (Lk. 15:8-10)  
Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:11-32)  
Unjust Steward (Lk. 16:1-13)  
Unprofitable Servant (Lk. 17:1-10)  
Unjust Judge (Lk. 18:1-8)  
Pharisee and Publican (Lk. 18:9-14)  
Pounds (Lk. 19:11-27)  
Good shepherd (Jn. 10:6-18)  
The vine and the branches (Jn. 15:1-17)

(Some of the previous study was taken from Bruce Lackey's *Ten Ways to Study the Bible*.)

# STUDYING THE BIBLE BY MEDITATING ON ONE PASSAGE

A very helpful type of Bible study is to meditate on one passage, finding as many thoughts and practical lessons as possible.

*The Blessings of the One Who Meditates on God's Word*

- He will prosper and have good success (Josh. 1:8)
- Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper (Psa. 1:1-3)
- He will have respect unto God's ways (Psa. 119:15)
- He will profit in the things of Christ and have a good reputation (1 Tim. 4:15)

The following suggestions for meditating upon a passage are by Dr. Bruce Lackey:

1. Write every thought, even the most obvious. Do not omit something because you think it is too simple. The obvious teachings of a verse will often lay the foundation for solving problems that may arise later. Also, what may be obvious to you may be unknown to another who is less experienced in the Christian life, and you should not overlook that which may help others.

2. Confine your thoughts to the particular verse you are studying. You will probably be reminded of other verses, but it is important to discipline yourself to stay with one at a time.

3. If the verse stirs your interest in a theme or topic elsewhere in Scripture, make a note of that on a separate sheet of paper for further study. The same would be true of researching the Greek or Hebrew word, etc. Consult commentaries, word studies, and other helps only after you have written every possible conclusion from your meditation of the verse.

4. Try to forget pre-conceived ideas about what the verse means. Let the Scripture speak to you, not vice versa.

5. Make sure that your thoughts and conclusions do not contradict the general message of the whole Bible. Remember that God is unchangeable (Mal. 3:6) and that His Word cannot contradict itself (Gal. 3:17).

6. The preacher or teacher could organize their conclusions into an outline that



would be suitable for a sermon or lesson.

## ***Examples***

### Meditating on one verse

#### *JOHN 3:16*

Ask yourself the question, “What are all of the lessons that I can find from this one verse without looking at any other verses?”

God loves men

God loves men very much (“so loved”)

God loves the whole world of men (“so loved the world”)

It is because of God’s love that He provided man’s salvation (“that he gave”)

God has a son

Jesus is God’s only begotten son

Jesus died to save all men (“the world”)

Salvation is for all men (“whosoever”)

Salvation is a gift (“he gave”)

Salvation is through faith (“whosoever believeth”)

Salvation is in Christ (“believeth in him”)

Salvation is sure and everlasting (“shall not perish but have everlasting life”)

Those who do not believe will perish; there is no universal salvation

### Meditating on one theme

#### *GENESIS 1*

Study this passage, asking yourself the following question: What does this passage teach me about God?

God created the world (v. 1)

God existed before the world (v. 1)

God has great power and wisdom

God speaks and His Word is powerful

God has a spirit (v. 2)

God loves man, (a) he made a wonderful world for him, (b) he made him in his own image, (c) he blessed him

God judges whether things are good (vv. 11, 18, 31)

God speaks of Himself in plural (v. 26)

**Home Study Assignment:** Choose one verse in the Bible and write down as many lessons from that one verse as you can think of.

# STUDYING THE TYPES OF THE BIBLE

**T**ypology is an important part of biblical teaching. Much of the Old Testament is composed of types. The word “type” is from the Greek word *tupos*, which is translated in the following ways:

- *Figure* (Rom. 5:14)
- *Pattern* (Titus 2:7; Heb. 8:5)
- *Example* (1 Cor. 10:6)
- *Fashion* (Acts 7:43)
- *Form* (Rom. 6:17)
- *Manner* (Acts 23:25)
- *Print* (John 20:25)

Thus, we see that a type is a figure or symbol of something.

## *VARIOUS CLASSIFICATIONS OF TYPES IN THE BIBLE*

Persons (Adam, Rom. 5:14)

Institutions (Marriage, Eph. 5:22-33)

Offices (Priesthood, Ps. 110:4 and Heb. 4:14-16)

Objects (Tabernacle, Heb. 9:1-10)

Events (Passover, 1 Cor. 5:7)

The following suggestions by Dr. Bruce Lackey for the study of types are helpful to prevent one from making unscriptural interpretations.

1. Use only a divinely-ordained person, thing, or incident, such as manna from heaven, or Moses smiting the rock. No ordinary event, such as the mere eating of food or putting on of apparel, would be a type. No New Testament Scripture refers to a mundane, common event as a type.

2. Have a Scripture which proves your comparison. Example: just as the manna came from heaven (Ex. 16:4), so Christ came from heaven (Jn. 6:33, 38). In this manner one will avoid the error of “discovering a new doctrine.”

3. If there is a New Testament passage which discusses the type, be sure to consider that first, to avoid a wrong doctrinal slant. For example, Romans 5:12-

21 for Adam; John 6:31-58 for the manna; Hebrews 9:1-28 for the tabernacle.

4. Note not only the points of comparison, but those of contrast as well. After telling us that Adam is a type of Christ (Rom. 5:14), verses 15-17 show several contrasts.

5. Use your knowledge of the New Testament as you read and meditate on an Old Testament passage. Note all comparisons and contrasts. Then, consult parallel references. As a last resort, read what others may have written in commentaries and typical studies.

## **TYPES OF CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

**ADAM** (Genesis 2; Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 15:47)

Adam is a type of Christ, not in his sin but in his life before sin.

1. The act of both affected the whole world (Rom. 5:12-18).

2. Both had a unique beginning: Adam, from the dust (Gen. 2:7); Christ, from the Holy Spirit through a virgin mother (Lk. 1:27, 35). This is humanly speaking, of course, because as the eternal son of God Christ had no beginning (Mic. 5:2).

3. Adam was given dominion over all the earth (Gen. 1:26-28). Christ will have dominion when He returns (Isa. 9:6-7).

4. Adam and his bride were to be fruitful (Gen. 1:28). Likewise, Christ and His bride are to be fruitful (Rom. 7:4).

5. Adam was to subdue all the earth (Gen. 1:28). Christ will do the same (1 Cor. 15:24).

6. God gave Adam work to do (Gen. 2:15). The Father sent Christ to do a specific job (Jn. 3:17).

7. God commanded Adam (Gen. 2:16). The Father did likewise to Christ, since He said *I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things* (Jn. 8:28).

8. God made a wife for Adam (Gen. 2:18-25). Christ also has one wife, the church (Eph. 5:25-33).

9. Adam was exceptionally wise, naming all the creatures (Gen. 2:19-20); Christ has all wisdom (Col. 2:3).

10. Adam was wounded so his bride could be formed (Gen. 2:21-22). Because of Christ's wounds (Isa. 53:5), we can become His bride.

11. Adam's wife was deceived into sin (1 Tim. 2:14). Likewise, Christ's bride had a deceitful heart (Jer. 17:9).

12. Adam evidently sinned deliberately, according to the implication in 1 Timothy 2:14. Christ deliberately took upon Himself our sins (1 Pet. 2:24).

13. It was because of the woman that Adam sinned (Gen. 3:6). It was because of us that Christ became sin (2 Cor. 5:21).

14. Adam's sin brought sorrow to him (Gen. 3:17). Because He took our sins, Christ was a man of sorrows (Isa. 53:3).

15. Adam's sins resulted in separation from God (Gen. 3:23-24). When He became sin for us, there was a separation between the Son and the Father (Mt. 27:46).

16. Adam's name was given to his wife (Gen. 5:2), and Christ's name has been given to us (1 Pet. 4:16).

17. Adam's likeness was imparted to his son (Gen. 5:30), and believers will be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29).

18. Adam was made in the image of God; Christ is the express image of God (Gen. 1:26-27; Heb. 1:3).

19. Adam's bride was formed while he slept; Christ's bride was formed because of his death (Gen. 2:21-22; Eph. 5:25). (Some of the previous study is by Dr. Bruce Lackey.)

### **SEED OF THE WOMAN** (Genesis 3:15; Hebrews 2:9-14)

God promised that a man would come who would be injured by Satan but who would destroy Satan ultimately. Jesus Christ was bruised on the cross, but it was only a heel wound; He rose from the dead! But through Christ's death Satan's destruction is guaranteed (Heb. 2:14). The fact that Jesus would be the seed of a woman instead of a man foreshadows His virgin birth.

### **ABEL'S OFFERING** (Genesis 4; John 1:29; Hebrews 12:24)

1. Abel's offering was an innocent substitute (compare Isa. 53).

2. Abel's offering was of blood and death (compare Heb. 12:24; Rom. 5:9-10).

3. Abel's offering was made by faith (Heb. 11:4; Eph. 2:8-9).

4. Abel's offering was not of works (Eph. 2:8-9).

5. Abel's offering exposed the error of false religion (Heb. 11:4).

### **NOAH'S ARK** (Genesis 6-8)

Christ is the only true Ark of safety whereby man can escape the eternal wrath

of God. As a picture of Christ and salvation, following are some of the lessons of Noah's ark:

1. The Ark was planned by God, not man (2 Tim. 1:9).
2. There was only ONE Ark, as there is only ONE Savior (Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5).
3. There was only ONE door (compare Jn. 14:6).
4. It was built by Noah, whose name means "rest" (compare Mat. 11:28-30; Heb. 4:9-11).
5. It was built by one man (compare Heb. 1:3).
6. It was sufficient and complete (compare Heb. 9:12).
7. It was offered to all men (2 Pet. 2:5; 1 Tim. 2:4).
8. It was needed by all men (Rom. 3:23; 6:23).
9. It saved both man and creation (compare Rom. 8:18-25).
10. It required faith and saved only those who exercised faith (Heb. 11:7).
11. God patiently waited (1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 3:9).
12. The offer of safety was limited to a certain period of time and had to be heeded while the opportunity existed (Gen. 7:11-13; 2 Cor. 6:2; 2 Thess. 2:10-14).
13. The ark was secured by God (Gen. 7:16; Jn. 10:27-29; 1 Jn. 5:11-13).

### **MELCHIZEDEK** (Genesis 14:17-20)

Six times in the Bible God says Jesus Christ is of the order of Melchizedek (Psa. 110:4; Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:17, 21).

1. Melchizedek foreviews Christ in HIS NAMES. He was king of righteousness and king of peace. In the Lord Jesus Christ, righteousness and peace have met. He makes peace between God and man because He paid man's sin debt (Rom. 5:1). There can be no real peace without righteousness (Isa. 48:22; 57:21).
2. Melchizedek foreviews Christ in HIS CITY. Melchizedek reigned in Salem (Gen. 14:18). This later became Jerusalem, and will be Christ's reigning city (Psa. 76:2; Zech. 8:3-8).
3. Melchizedek foreviews Christ in HIS OFFICES: Melchizedek was king (Gen. 14:18), priest (Gen. 14:18), and prophet (Gen. 14:19). The Lord Jesus Christ is also King (1 Tim. 6:14-15), Priest (Heb. 7-10), and Prophet (Deut. 18:15; Ac. 3:22).

4. Melchizedek foreviewed Christ in HIS AUTHORITY. Genesis 14 is the first mention of tithing in the Bible, and it was long before God gave the Law of Moses. Tithing has always been God's plan for the support of His earthly work. God's people today tithe of their income to support God's great program of world evangelism. Tithing honors God as the Giver and Possessor of all (Prov. 3:9-10).

5. Melchizedek foreviews Christ in HIS WORK: He ministered to God's people (Gen. 14:18; Mat. 20:28). He blessed God's people (Gen. 14:19; Lk. 24:51). He glorified God (Gen. 14:20; Jn. 17:4).

6. Melchizedek foreviews Christ in HIS PROVISION. Melchizedek provided bread and wine for Abraham (Gen. 14:18). This foreviews Christ's provision of His body and blood for the needs of His people (Mt. 26:26-28).

7. Melchizedek foreviews Christ in HIS MYSTERY. There is a mysterious aspect to Melchizedek, because the Bible says he had no beginning of days nor end of life (Heb. 7:3). This reminds us that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, "*whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting*" (Mic. 5:2).

### **ISAAC** (Genesis 21-24)

1. He was a promised son (Ge. 21:1).
2. His birth was miraculous (Ge. 21:5; Ro. 4:19).
3. He pleased his father.
4. He was offered by the father (Ge. 22).
5. He received a bride from a far country (Ge. 24).

### **JOSEPH** (Genesis 37-50)

Joseph pictures Christ in His troubles, His rejection, and His exaltation.

1. The beloved son (Gen. 37:2-3; Mt. 3:17)
2. The good shepherd (Gen. 37:2; Jn. 10:11)
3. The sent servant (Gen. 37:13; 1 Jn. 4:14)
4. The one who was despised and rejected (Isa. 53:3; Jn. 1:11)
5. The brother who was sold (Gen. 37:28; Mt. 26:15)
6. The lonely sufferer (Gen. 39:20; Is. 53:8)
7. The honored statesman (Gen. 41:40; Jn. 3:35)
8. The world's savior (Gen. 41:55; 1 Jn. 4:14)

## **THE PASSEVER LAMB** (Exodus 12)

The Passover lamb was killed; its blood was applied to the homes; and it was eaten by each family in obedience to God's instructions. It depicts redemption from God's wrath through faith in Christ's blood (Jn. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7).

1. The lamb was without blemish (Ex. 12:5), typifying Christ's sinlessness.
2. The lamb was required for every man (Ex. 12:3), signifying that every sinner needs to be saved and must exercise personal faith in Christ.
3. The lamb was slain (Ex. 12:6), signifying that Jesus died for our sins (Rom. 5:10; 1 Cor. 15:3). The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).
4. The lamb's blood was spilt (Ex. 12:6), signifying that Jesus shed His blood (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:12). Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (Heb. 9:22).
5. The lamb was slain by Israel (Ex. 12:6), signifying that the Jews would kill Jesus (Jn. 19:14-15).
6. The blood of the lamb was applied to the door (Ex. 12:7), signifying faith in Christ's atonement (Rom. 3:25).
7. The lamb was eaten (Ex. 12:8), signifying the fellowship the believer has with Christ after salvation (Jn. 6:51).

## **MANNA** (Exodus 16:4-31)

The manna pictures Christ as the Bread of Life (Jn. 6:31-35, 48-51).

1. The manna was a gift of God; it was free (Isa. 55:1; Eph. 2:8-9).
2. The manna was sufficient (Jn. 6:35).
3. The manna was tasty (Ex. 16:31; Num. 11:8; Psa. 34:8).
4. The manna had to be gathered every day (Ex. 16:35).

## **SMITTEN ROCK** (Exodus 17:5-6; 1 Corinthians 10:4)

The smitten rock pictures Jesus smitten on the cross for man's sin.

1. Just as water flowed from the smitten rock to give life to Israel in the wilderness, eternal life and blessing flow from Christ's cross to the believer in this present life.
2. The water was God's free gift; and Christ's salvation is a free gift (Eph. 2:8-9).
3. The rock was to be smitten only once. This is what got Moses in trouble. The second time he was merely to speak to the rock, but he smote it again thus ruining the typology (Num. 20:7-12). Christ died for our sins once and for all (Heb. 10:10).



4. The water had to be drunk. The water was freely provided, but each Israelite had to partake of the water or it would not have sustained him. Likewise, salvation has been provided for all men (1 Tim. 2:6; 1 John 2:2), but each sinner must receive Christ for himself or he will die in his sins (John 3:18, 36).

5. The rock followed Israel, to continually sustain them (1 Cor. 10:4), as Christ faithfully abides with His people, ministering to them continually (Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5).

### **DAY OF ATONEMENT** (Leviticus 16)

The Day of Atonement pictures Christ as our Great High Priest, by Himself making atonement for our sins.

1. The High Priest's white linen clothing depicts the holiness of Christ (Lev. 16:4; He. 7:26).

2. The High Priest went into the Holy of Holies alone, and Christ purchased our salvation "by himself" (Heb. 1:3).

3. The High Priest did the work of atonement in the place of the people of Israel, for them, and Christ suffered in our place (1 Pet. 3:18).

4. The High Priest made atonement by the sprinkling of blood, and Christ has redeemed us by His blood (Heb. 10:19).

5. The High Priest did not go into the Holy of Holies to make atonement every day but only once a year, thus depicting the once for all sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 7:27; 9:26-28; 10:14).

6. The sevenfold sprinkling depicts the completeness and perfection of Christ's sacrifice (Lev. 16:19; Heb. 9:12).

7. The release of the scapegoat depicts the sufficiency of Christ's atonement to take away out sin (Lev. 16:20-22; Heb. 10:17-19).

### **CITIES OF REFUGE** (Numbers 35)

Jesus Christ is the sinner's refuge from the wrath of God's law.

#### Comparisons:

1. God provided a place of refuge (Jn. 6:37).

2. No other place is safe (Jn. 14:6).

3. The sinner had to flee to safety (Nu. 35:11, 15; Heb. 6:18).

#### Contrasts:

1. The cities of refuge were only for those who were innocent (Nu. 35:15-21), but Christ died for sinners (2 Tim. 1:13-15; Ac. 22:4).

2. The sinner had to stay in the place of refuge or he would lose his security (Nu. 35:26-28), but Christ keeps the believer (Jn. 10:28; 1 Pet. 1:5).

### **THE BRAZEN SERPENT** (Numbers 21:6-9)

The Israelites being healed by looking on the brazen serpent was used by Christ as an illustration for salvation (John 3:14-16).

1. The brazen serpent had to be lifted up in order to become effective. Likewise, Christ has to be lifted up on the cross for our salvation. See John 12:32-33.

2. The offer of healing was to be proclaimed to all. Compare Mark 16:15.

3. While the healing was provided for all, it had to be individually received. Compare John 3:18, 36; 1 Tim. 4:10.

4. The dying sinner had to confess and pray (“we have sinned” and “pray unto the Lord” Num. 21:7). Likewise, the sinner has to acknowledge his sinfulness before God (Luke 13:3, 5; 18:13-14; Rom. 3:10-23).

5. The same instrument that brought salvation at the same time reminded the sinner of his sin. The serpent that bit the rebellious Israelites is what they had to look at for redemption. Likewise, the cross on which died reminds the sinner that it was our sin that caused Christ’s death.

6. The healing was immediate, sure, and permanent. Likewise, salvation is immediate, sure, and eternal (John 3:16; Heb. 10:14; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 5:13).

7. There was no other effective remedy. Likewise, the only way of salvation for the sinner is Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 3:5-6).

### **JOSHUA**

Joshua pictures Christ as the Captain of the Lord’s people, leading us into eternal salvation and rest (Heb. 2:10).

1. He was a wise leader. Compare 1 Timothy 1:17.

2. He was vigilant. Compare Hebrews 7:25.

3. He judged sin in the camp (Josh. 7). Compare Revelation 2-3.

4. He was victorious over all enemies. Compare 1 Corinthians 15:25; Revelation 19:11-21.

5. He led God’s people into rest. Compare Hebrews 4:4-10.

### **BOAZ** (the book of Ruth)

The name *Boaz* means “in Him is ability.” He is a type of Christ in the following ways:

1. In wealth (Ru. 2:1; 2 Cor. 8:9; Eph. 3:8).

2. In grace (Ru. 2:4; Jn. 1:14-16).

3. In authority (Ru. 2:5; Mt. 9:38).

4. In supply (Ru. 2:14; Jn. 6:51; 7:37).

5. In kinship (Ru. 2:20; Heb. 2:14).

6. In redemption (Ru. 4:9-10; Gal. 3:13).

## **DAVID** (1, 2 Samuel)

In David we see Jesus Christ foreviewed as an exiled king who returns in victory and power.

## **SOLOMON** (1 Kings 3-10).

Solomon pictures Christ's future glorious earthly reign.

## **JONAH** (Jonah 2; Matthew 12:39-41)

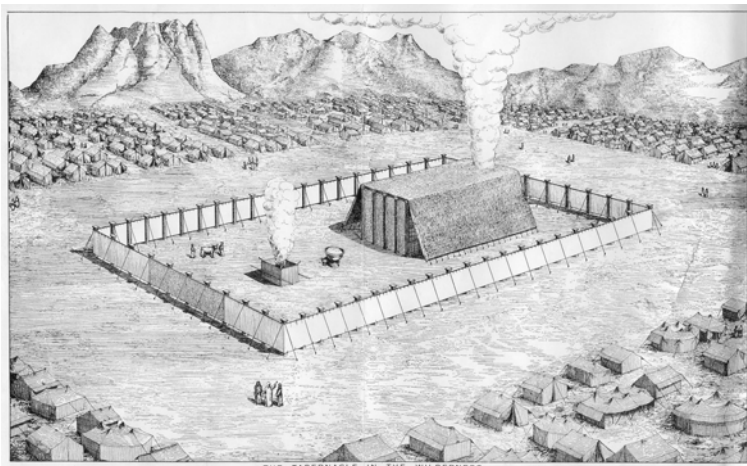
Jonah's three days in the fish's belly pictures Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. As Jonah was a sign to Ninevah, Jesus' resurrection was a sign to the Jews.

## **THE TABERNACLE**

The Old Testament Tabernacle (Ex. 25-27) is a detailed illustration of Christ and of His salvation. The writer of Hebrews plainly says the Tabernacle was a foreview of heavenly truths and realities (Heb. 9).

### *THE COURT AREA.*

The Tabernacle was a tent situated in a rectangular court formed by a wall of curtains. The court was 100 cubits long by 50 cubits wide, and the curtain walls were five cubits high (Ex. 27:9, 12, 18). Using



a cubit of 18 inches, this would mean the court was 150 feet by 75 feet, and the walls were 7.5 feet high. The court had only one entrance. Near this entrance was situated the altar of sacrifice where the bodies of the animals were burnt. Before the entrance to the Tabernacle itself was a laver of water the priests used for washing.

*THE TABERNACLE.* Within the court area was the Tabernacle proper set toward the back of the court. The Tabernacle was a tent divided into two compartments—the holy place in the front, and the holy of holies in the rear. The compartments were separated by a curtain. The holy place contained the golden candlestick, the table of shewbread, and the golden incense altar. The holy of holies contained the ark of the covenant overshadowed by the cherubim.

*GENERAL LESSONS ABOUT THE TABERNACLE:*

1. The Tabernacle represents God's presence and men shut out from God's presence and fellowship because of sin.

2. The walls of the court were made of fine white linen (Ex. 27:9-15), illustrating the absolute purity demanded in God's Law. White linen symbolizes righteousness (Rev. 19:8). The spotless white walls of the court remind us that God is holy and (Psa. 92:15) will accept no impure thing into His holy presence. The Law demands perfection (Gal. 3:10) and reveals man's guilt and condemnation (Rom. 3:9-20, 23; Isa. 53:6; 59:2; 64:6).

3. The walls of the court were set in brass sockets (Ex. 27:10, 11, 17). Brass symbolizes judgment, and reminds us that the believer can only come into the presence of God when sin is fully judged. This requires a Savior, which is depicted by the sacrifice altar.

*THE ENTRANCE INTO THE TABERNACLE*

1. There was only one entrance to the court through a curtain in the front called the gate. This gate represents Jesus Christ as the only way to God (Jn. 14:6; 10:7-9; Ac. 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5-6). Any man who would approach the tent of God's presence had to enter through that one beautifully woven gate. There was no other way.

2. The curtain was made of the same white linen as the walls, depicting Christ's holiness (Heb. 4:15).

3. The threads of three colors woven into the curtain depict Christ in three ways (Ex. 27:16-18). The blue thread represents Christ's heavenly origin. The scarlet represents His atonement. The purple thread represents His position as King. He is the Lord from Heaven (1 Cor. 15:47), the Savior (1 Tim. 1:15), and the King of kings (1 Tim. 6:14-16). The four colors of the curtains remind us of the four Gospels, which portray Christ as king, servant, God, and perfect man. How much even the appearance of a colored thread means in God's Word!

4. The brass sockets (Ex. 26:36, 38) remind us that man is separated from God because of God's hatred of and judgment of sin (Num. 16:29-39; 21:4-9). The penalty for sin must be paid. God's judgment must fall. And praise God, it has already fallen upon Jesus, so the believing sinner can now freely draw near to God through Him.

The exact same type of curtain was over the entrance to the holy place and over the entrance to the holy of holies in the Tabernacle. Jesus Christ is the one and only door to God and salvation. He is the entrance into all true life and into every true spiritual blessing. To reach the altar of sacrifice, representing cleansing of sin, the Israelite had to pass through the four-colored curtain. To reach the candlestick, representing spiritual enlightenment, or the table of shewbread, representing fellowship with God, or the altar of incense, representing communion with God in prayer, the priest had to pass through the exact same kind of curtain. To enter into the very presence of God in the holy of holies, one, again, had to pass through the same mysterious four-colored curtain. Jesus Christ is the key to everything pertaining to God and true life.

The approach from outside the court to the holy of holies represents a sinner's approach to God through Jesus Christ.

#### *THE ALTAR OF SACRIFICE*

1. The first thing one encountered at the door of the court was the brazen altar, the place of sacrifice, representing the necessity of the blood and death of Jesus Christ for sin. The brazen altar signified Christ's Cross. No one can be reconciled to God or enjoy His fellowship without first being forgiven through the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:22).

2. The altar was made of brass, depicting



judgment (Nu. 21:9). God's judgment for sin fell upon Christ (2 Cor. 5:21).

3. Even the size of the objects in the Tabernacle were important and teach spiritual truth. The brazen altar, for example, was twice the size of the ark of the covenant which contained the Law. This demonstrates that Jesus' blood and death are more than sufficient to meet all of God's demands and man's need (Rom. 5:20).

*THE LAVER FOR WASHING.* The next object one encountered was the laver containing water for cleansing.



1. This depicts the demand of God that His people put away sin from their lives following redemption. First, the altar of sacrifice and then the laver of cleansing. First, justification by grace through faith in Christ's blood (Rom. 3:21-28) and then obedience to God's commands through the power of His Spirit (Eph. 2:8-10). First relationship, then fellowship. The laver depicts the same thing Jesus signified when He washed the disciples'

feet. He told them they did not need to be bathed again; they needed only to have their feet washed (Jn. 13:10). In other words, the Christian needs only one bath of salvation, but he needs the daily cleansing of the Word of God to maintain his fellowship with the Savior.

2. The laver pictures the two-way action of God's Word in cleansing sin from believer's lives. It reveals sin, and it cleanses sin. The laver was made of brass looking glasses (Ex. 38:8), representing the fact that the Bible reveals sin (He. 4:12; Jam. 1:22-25).

3. The water of the laver represents the washing of sin through confession and obedience (1 Jn. 1:5-10).

### *THE TABERNACLE*

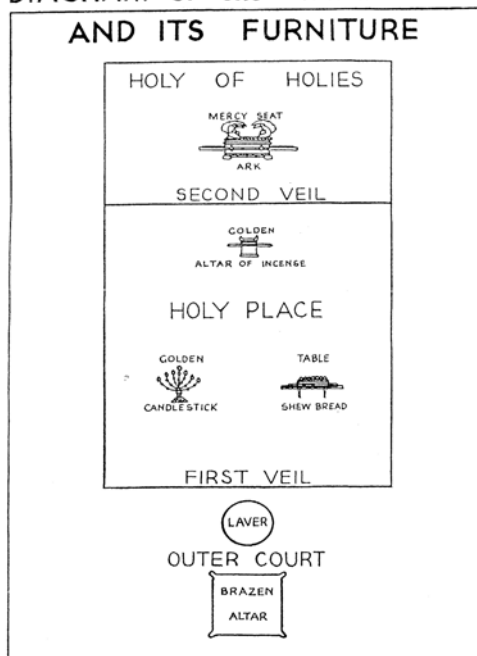
The Tabernacle was made of a wooden frame overlaid with four layers of curtains (Ex. 26:1-14). The walls of the Tabernacle were held up by boards covered with gold and placed in silver sockets (Ex. 26:15-30).

1. The silver represents the price of redemption (Ex. 30:11-16), and taught that

the entire structure of God's salvation is upheld by Christ's atonement. Every spiritual blessing comes to us through what Jesus did for us on the cross and the fact that we are "in Christ (Eph. 1:3). Just as the Tabernacle was separated from the ground by the silver sockets, the believer is forever separated from the world and the old creation by the blood of Christ (Rom. 6:7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:14).

2. The boards over which the curtains were laid were made of shittim wood and covered with gold, representing the humanity and deity of Christ. The shittim wood was a common wood that grew in the desert, a fitting type of Jesus' humanity. The gold, on the other hand, pictures deity.

## DIAGRAM of the TABERNACLE



### 3. Next we consider the curtains themselves.

- The first layer of curtains was composed of linen intertwined with blue, purple, and scarlet thread, representing Jesus Christ in the various ways already mentioned. Next there was a covering made of goats' hair, then a covering of rams' skins dyed red, and finally a covering of black badgers' skins.
- These coverings symbolize the truth that Jesus' glory as the eternal Son of God was hidden during His earthly sojourn. He took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man (Phil. 2:5-8). The beauty of the linen curtains was hidden under the covering of goats' hair, rams' and badgers' skins, as the glory of Christ's deity was hidden by His humanity. Those standing outside looking toward the Tabernacle could see only an ordinary covering of black skins, but those who entered by means of the curtain enjoyed the beauty of the interior, the gold-covered boards and the lovely woven linen curtains held together by taches of pure gold. Likewise,

to have looked at Christ in His earthly existence one would have seen nothing extraordinary (Isa. 53:2). Only those who walked with Him and saw Him through the eye of faith could see His glory (Jn. 1:14).

### *THE HOLY PLACE*



Once a person was inside the Tabernacle he could enjoy the various objects therein, such as the light from the candlestick, the altar of incense, and the table of shewbread, and, of course, the beautiful interior itself.

1. This reminds us that man cannot participate in any of God's blessings unless he comes through the one Savior and the one Gospel. All of the articles of the

Tabernacle picture Jesus Christ in various ways.

2. The light of the candlestick pictures Jesus giving understanding to men (Jn. 8:12).

3. The bread pictures fellowship, communion with Christ (Jn. 6:51; 1 Jn. 1:3).

4. The altar of incense pictures prayer (Rev. 5:8). Jesus Christ is everything to the believer (1 Cor. 1:30, 31; Eph. 1:3; Col. 1:19).

### *THE HOLY OF HOLIES*

The rear compartment of the Tabernacle, the Holy of Holies, contained the cherubim and the ark of testimony.

1. The ark contained the table of the Law and was covered by the mercy seat, representing Christ's atonement that fulfills the demands of God's holy Law. The Greek word for "mercy seat" in the N.T. is also translated "propitiation" (Rom. 3:25; 1 Jn. 2:2), and means satisfaction or covering. Jesus Christ wholly satisfied the demands of God's Law. The fact that the mercy seat perfectly fit the ark (both were 2.5 cubits long by 1.5 cubits wide, Ex. 25:10, 17) and fully covered the law contained therein depicts the complete sufficiency of Christ's atonement



(Heb. 10:10, 14). No one can add to the salvation God offers freely through Jesus Christ. It does not need to be added to; it does not need to be perfected. It is eternally complete. In every generation since the days of the apostles, false teachers have been troubling the churches with the idea that to be right with God one must have faith in Christ PLUS obedience in some way to the works of the law or to ecclesiastical sacraments. The wonderful presence of the mercy seat covering the ark of testimony reminds us that the grace of Christ ALONE and faith in His blood ALONE is sufficient for salvation.



2. The High Priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year and sprinkled blood seven times upon and before the mercy seat (Lev. 16:11-16). This signified the perfection of the atonement which was accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross (Heb. 9-10).

3. The curtain in front of the holy of holies was rent from top to bottom when Jesus Christ died on the cross (Mat. 27:50,51), showing that the way to God has been opened by Christ's blood. The believer can truly say, "There is nothing between my soul and my God." We can come boldly unto a throne of grace (Heb. 4:16). The tall thick curtain was torn from top to bottom, depicting the fact that salvation is entirely a work of God. The religions of this world are man's attempts to work his way to God. True salvation is God working salvation for man (2 Cor. 5:18-21).

## **THE OLD TESTAMENT OFFERINGS**

Leviticus 1-7 describes the O.T. offerings under the Mosaic Law. All of these typify Jesus Christ and N.T. truth (Rom. 15:4).

### *THE BURNT OFFERING* (Leviticus 1)

1. This pictures Christ's utter devotion to God which was well pleasing to God (Lev. 1:9; Mt. 3:17; 26:39; Jn. 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:50; 17:4; 18:11; Ph. 2:8; He. 9:11-14; 10:5-7).

2. It pictures the believer's acceptance in Christ (Lev. 1:3-4). He is our atonement and righteousness.

3. It also pictures the believer's devotion to God as accepted in Christ (Rom. 12:1-2).

#### *THE MEAL OFFERING* (Leviticus 2)

1. This typifies Christ in His human perfections tested by suffering.

a. There was the fine flour, depicting Christ's purity and perfection.

b. There was the oil, depicting the Holy Spirit.

c. It was baked in the oven, depicting Christ's suffering of the cross.

d. There was no leaven, reminding us of Christ's sinlessness.

e. There was no honey. Some commentators believe that the honey symbolized man's natural character; Christ's goodness and affection was far above that of a natural man.

2. This typifies Christ bringing the believer together with the Father in communion (Jn. 14:21-23; 1 Jn. 1:3).

3. Both the priests and God had a portion in this offering (Lev. 2:2-3). This pictures God the Father and the believer finding their satisfaction and fellowship in Christ.

#### *THE PEACE OFFERING* (Leviticus 3; 7:28-34)

1. This typifies Christ in His death making peace between God and man (Ro. 5:1; Col. 1:20). Christ's offering was well pleasing to the Father, a sweet savor. Peace with God comes through death and blood of the innocent Substitute.

2. This also typifies the believer enjoying this peace with God. This is why the offering could be male or female. Our perception of Christ's peace offering is not perfect. In contrast, the other two offerings which picture God's enjoying of Christ required a male sacrifice which perfectly symbolizes Christ.

#### *THE SIN OFFERING* (Leviticus 4)

1. This typifies Jesus Christ as our sin-bearer (Is. 53; 2 Co. 5:21).

2. This also typifies the Christian receiving and enjoying forgiveness of sin (Col.

2:13; Heb. 10:10-22). The offering provided forgiveness for all classes of the people--priests, congregation, rulers, and common people—reminding us that all men must approach God in the same way, through Christ's one sacrifice. "The sin offering is Christ seen laden with the believer's sin, absolutely in the sinner's place and stead, and not, as in the sweet savour offerings, in His own perfections. The sin offerings are expiatory, substitutionary, efficacious (Lev. 4:12, 29, 35), and have in view the vindication of the law through substitutional sacrifice" (Scofield).

### *THE TRESPASS OFFERING (Leviticus 5-6)*

This offering pictures Christ as the provision for individual sins the believer commits (1 Jn. 1:5-10). The process of the offerer approaching God depicts the steps necessary for a believer to deal with daily sin and to maintain fellowship with God. Consider some lessons from this offering:

1. Sin of any sort hinders fellowship (Lev. 5:1-5, 15, 17; 6:2-5); all must be judged and confessed and righted (1 Cor. 11:31; 1 Jn. 1:5-10).
2. The moment the Lord reveals a sin or problem, we must set about making it right.
3. The steps required in getting things right when we sin are confession (Lev. 5:6-9), renewal of one's consecration (Lev. 5:10), and restitution when appropriate (Lev. 5:16; 6:4-5; Mat. 5:23-24).
4. Sins against men are also sins against God (Lev. 6:2). Compare Psalm 51:4 and Luke 15:18.
5. Restitution makes us right with man, but only the blood of Christ and redemption make us right with God (Lev. 5:15-16).
6. Sin is costly; we never sin without paying a price (Lev. 5:15). Sin cost God a great price (1 Pet. 1:18-19). The wages of sin is always death.
7. Forgiveness is available to all (Lev. 5:6, 7, 11).

## **The Typology of the Offerings**

### *TYPOLGY OF THE ANIMALS*

The ox depicts Christ as the strong, faithful servant of God (Phil. 2:5-8).

The sheep or lamb depicts Christ's willingness to suffer on the Cross (Isa. 53:7; Ac. 8:32-35).

The goat depicts Christ taking the sinner's place in judgment (Mat. 25:33; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; Lk. 23:33; 1 Pet. 2:24).

The dove or pigeon depicts Christ as the poor man's Savior, the One willing to lay aside His riches and to become poor that we might be made rich (2 Cor. 8:9; Lk. 2:24).

#### *TYPOLOGY OF THE OFFERINGS*

The Burnt offerings depict devotion to God; they are entirely consumed on the altar.

The Meal and Peace offerings depict fellowship and service; they are eaten by the priest and offered to God.

The Sin offering depicts Christ as our sin-bearer.

The Trespass offering depicts Christ dealing with sin in the daily life (1 Jn. 1).

#### *TYPOLOGY OF THE DETAILS*

The hand on the animal's head symbolizes identification with the sacrifice and acceptance of the sacrifice in one's place; personal faith; confession of sin; recognition that God has provided a way of forgiveness.

The killing and shedding of blood depicts the means of salvation through the bloody death of Christ (Rom. 5:9-10). Note that both blood and death are required.

The fine flour depicts the perfect righteousness of Christ.

The anointing with oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1:21; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27).

The frankincense depicts that which is exclusively set apart to God (Lev. 2:16; 24:7; Ex. 30:34).

The leaven symbolizes evil (1 Cor. 5:6-8).

The honey symbolizes natural sweetness and goodness (Ex. 3:8; Prov. 24:13).

The salt depicts self-judgment and caution (Mk. 9:49-50; 1 Cor. 11:31; Col. 4:5-6). It also depicts God's covenant (Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19), and the power of

God's truth that stops the leaven of error and evil.

The sprinkling of the blood seven times indicates completeness and perfection, as in the seven days of creation and the seven seals of Revelation.

### **The Order of the Offerings**

In Leviticus 1-5, God's portion, the burnt offering, is listed first, because God's glory and pleasure is to be the main consideration of the Christian.

In Leviticus 9 the order is reversed and the sin offering is listed first, symbolizing the order of Christian experience which is awareness of forgiveness, dedication, fellowship, and experiential peace.

## **THE HIGH PRIEST**

Jesus Christ is the High Priest between God and men (Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14). O.T. priests were symbolic of Christ (Heb. 5-10). The details of the clothing and consecration of the high priest and his sons in Exodus 28 and 29 are representative of Christ. By looking carefully and prayerfully at Aaron in his splendid priestly garments, one can learn wonderful things about Christ. Aaron's sons typify Christians who have been made priests in Christ (1 Pet. 2:9).

### *THE PRIESTLY GARMENTS*

Let us briefly consider the garments for the high priest, which represent the Person and work of the Son of God.



1. All of the garments were made with fine white linen, with blue, purple, scarlet, and gold thread (Ex. 28:5).

- a. The white linen speaks of Christ's purity and sinlessness (1 Pet. 2:22).
- b. The blue thread speaks of Christ's heavenly origin and present position at the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:33; 5:31; 1 Cor. 15:47).
- c. The purple thread speaks of Jesus' royalty; He is King of kings (1 Tim. 6:15).

d. The scarlet thread speaks of Christ's blood atonement; He is the Savior.

e. The gold speaks of Christ's deity; He is God (John 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:16).

2. The garments as a whole symbolize Christ in His three offices: Savior Priest (ephod), Prophet (Urim and Thummin), and King (mitre and crown).

According to Leviticus 8:7-8, the linen coat and the girdle were put on first, followed by the blue robe, and finally the ephod. This would indicate that the ephod hung over the priest's body, suspended from the shoulderpieces, hanging down in the back and the front. The breastplate was then connected to the front of the ephod.

*THE COAT.* The coat was made of fine linen and was put on over the linen breeches which covered the nakedness of the priest (Ex. 28:40-42). These items particularly symbolize the holiness and sinless purity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*THE GIRDLE.* To secure the coat, a girdle was used (Ex. 28:39). The girdle was used in service, as when Jesus girded Himself to wash the feet of the disciples (Jn. 13:4). The girdle represents Jesus as the Servant of God, which is the theme of the Gospel of Mark.

*THE ROBE.* The robe of the ephod was the main covering for the high priest--a long robe all of blue color (Ex. 28:31-35). This depicts the truth that though Christ became a man and is still a man (Ac. 17:31; 1 Tim. 2:5), He originated from Heaven and is the Lord from Heaven (1 Cor. 15:47). He is not of this creation, and those who receive Him are translated from this old creation and placed into a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). They, too, are no longer of this world (Gal. 6:14). Though believers still live in the world, they are even now citizens of Heaven (Jn. 17:6, 14-17; Eph. 2:6; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:1-4).

*POMEGRANATES.* Upon the hem of the robe were sewn blue, purple, and scarlet pomegranates. This is a fruit and symbolizes the fruitfulness of Christ. Through the atonement He made for sin and by His present work of world evangelism, He is drawing multitudes to Himself (Heb. 2:10).

*BELLS.* Between the pomegranates were sewn gold bells that rang as the high priest went about his labors. These bells related particularly to the high priest's work in the Holy Place so that the people outside the Tabernacle, though unable to see the priest, could hear the bells and be assured that he was busy in their

behalf and that God was accepting his labors. This beautifully fits this present age, during which Jesus, our great High Priest, has gone into Heaven and is not visible to human eyes on earth. The bells represent the testimony of the Holy Spirit as He witnesses to men of Jesus' existence and work (Jn. 16:12-15). The Holy Spirit has given us the Scriptures that plainly tell us of Christ, and He also abides in God's people to witness personally of the things of Christ (1 Jn. 2:20, 27).

*THE EPHOD.* The ephod (Ex. 28:6-14) was placed over the head and shoulders of the high priest and was made of fine linen with gold, blue, purple, and scarlet colors woven in it (Ex. 28:6; 39:2-5). The gold was a thread made from actual gold (Ex. 39:3). Other priests also wore ephods, but they were not adorned with the jewels and other items associated with the high priestly ephod (1 Sam. 22:18).

*THE ONYX STONES.* On the shoulders of the ephod were two onyx stones set in gold with the names of the tribes of Israel engraved therein (Ex. 28:9-12; 39:6-7). This represented the truth that God's people are kept secure by Christ's divine strength. We rest in Christ's power, not our own (1 Pet. 1:2, 5; Mat. 11:28; 1 Pet. 5:7).

*THE BREASTPLATE.* Upon the ephod was bound the breastplate, which was placed over the priest's chest upon his heart (Ex. 28:15-29). On the breastplate were twelve precious stones set in four rows of three each, each stone having the name of the one of the tribes of Israel engraved thereupon. This pictures Christ's great love for His people. They are permanently engraved upon His heart (Jn. 13:1). Each of the tribes of Israel had its own place upon the heart of the high priest, and each believer today has a special place in Christ's heart (Ep. 3:17-19). As the names of Israel were always upon the priest's shoulders and heart, each individual believer is forever preserved and loved by Christ. The names were set in precious stones to illustrate the great value God's people have in His eyes (Mal. 3:16-17).

*URIM AND THUMMIN.* The Urim and Thummim were apparently used as a means of obtaining revelation from God (Ex. 28:30; Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8-10; 1 Sam. 28:6; Ezra 2:63). This pointed to the truth given through the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest (Jn. 1:17). The meaning of the Urim and Thummim, "lights and perfections," speaks of Christ as that perfect Light (Jn. 1:9; 8:12; Col. 2:3). As to the actual form, we cannot be certain of this today. Some have surmised that the Urim and Thummim were used to cast lots and

thereby discern the mind of God. There are Scriptures that indicate that the leaders of Israel did cast lots on certain occasions (Lev. 16:8; Num. 26:55; Jos. 7:14-18; 13:6; 18:8; 1 Sam. 14:41-42). The apostles also cast lots to find the replacement for Judas (Ac. 1:26). Other commentators identify the Urim and Thummim with the 12 stones of the breastplate.

*THE MITRE OR CROWN.* Upon the high priest's head was placed a holy crown, or mitre, made of fine white linen (Ex. 28:36-39). This represented Christ as King. Upon the front of the mitre was attached a golden plate engraved with the words "Holiness to the Lord," picturing the absolute purity of Christ and His utter dedication of Christ to the will of the Father. "Holy" means set apart to God, and the Lord Jesus was indeed this. His every thought and desire was to do the will of the Father who had sent Him. Exodus 28:38 says the golden plate was always upon Aaron's forehead in order that the people might be accepted before God. Thus we see that believers are not accepted before God because of their own holiness, but because of the holiness of their High Priest, Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3-7; Col. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 1:30).

*THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRIEST.* The consecration of the priests (Ex. 29) represents wonderful spiritual truths, especially as a picture of the consecration of believers today.

The difference between Aaron and his sons is noted in the following statement: "Aaron alone was anointed before the blood was shed; he was clad in his robes of office and anointed with the holy oil before ever his sons were clothed or anointed. The reason of this is obvious. Aaron, when spoken of by himself, typifies Christ in His own peerless excellency and dignity; and, as we know, Christ appeared in all His own personal worth and was anointed by the Holy Ghost previous to the accomplishment of His atoning work. In all things He has the pre-eminence (Col. 1:18). Still, there is the fullest identification afterwards between Aaron and his sons, as there is the fullest identification between Christ and His people. 'The Sanctifier and the sanctified are all of one' (He. 2:11). The personal distinctness enhances the value of the mystic oneness" (C.H. Mackintosh, *Notes on the Pentateuch*, p. 340).

In the process of consecration, the priests first were washed with water (Ex. 29:4). Now it must be noted that none of this typifies salvation. Consecration is the process of dedication and sanctification following redemption. The washing with water illustrates God's demand that His people be pure and put away sin from their lives. Often in Scripture the Word of God is identified as the water



God uses to cleanse His saints (Eph. 5:26; Jn. 15:3; 17:17; Jam. 1:21; 1 Pet. 2:1-2). The Scriptures are the living Word of God (Heb. 4:12), and not only show the way of righteousness, but give the believer power to walk in that way (Jn. 8:31-32). The need is seen for believers to let the Word of God dwell richly in them through reading, studying, singing, hearing, meditating in, and memorizing the Scriptures (Col. 3:16).

Aaron was next clothed and anointed with oil (Ex. 29:5-7), symbolizing the first coming of Jesus and His anointing by the Spirit of God (Isa. 11:1-3; 61:1-2; Lk. 3:21-22; 4:16-21). Jesus was sinless and had no need for an atonement for Himself. He did not need to be cleansed before receiving the Spirit. Thus, Aaron, as the type of Christ, was anointed before the blood of the sacrifices was shed and applied. The sons of Aaron, typifying Christ's people, could not be anointed until first they had been cleansed by the blood.

# **Review Questions on Studying Individual Passages of Scripture, Studying the Topics of the Bible, the Books of the Bible, the People of the Bible, the Parables of the Bible, and the Types of the Bible**

- 1-4. What are the four steps we give for studying individual passages of Scripture?
5. How do we know that Jesus was warning about hypocritical judgment in Matthew 7?
6. Topical Bible study is called \_\_\_\_\_ Theology.
7. What verse says the believer has the mind of Christ?
8. How can we find out what God thinks about something?
- 9-10. What are two benefits from studying the individual books of the Bible?
- 11-12 Parable means to lay something \_\_\_\_\_ another and to \_\_\_\_\_ two things.
- 13-14. Other than “parable,” what two other English words are translated from the Greek word *parabole*?
15. The Bible parable has been called “an earthly story with a \_\_\_\_\_ meaning.”
16. The Lord Jesus taught in parables to \_\_\_\_\_ truth from those who would not believe Him.
17. In what book and chapter did Jesus tell his disciples that He spoke in parables, “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given”?
18. *The primary law of interpreting parables is as follows:* A parable is given to teach \_\_\_\_\_ central truth.
- 19-21. What are the first three rules for interpreting parables?

22-23. In the parable of the Wheat and Tares in Matthew 13, Christ was describing the conditions that will exist in the \_\_\_\_\_ during His absence in Heaven. He plainly stated this in verse 38, where He says that the field is the \_\_\_\_\_, not the churches.

24. In what context is leaven first mentioned in Scripture?

25. In the parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven in Matthew 13 Christ was actually speaking of the growth of \_\_\_\_\_.

26-27. What are two reasons why we know that the man cast into outer darkness in Matthew 25 was unsaved?

28. What is the first reason why we believe that the story of the rich man in hell in Luke 16 is not a parable?

29. A biblical type is a \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ of something.

30-35. What are the five categories of types in the Bible?

36-40. What are five men in the Old Testament who are types of Christ?

41-44. What are four objects in the Old Testament that are types of Christ?

45-47. The Tabernacle was a \_\_\_\_\_ situated in a rectangular \_\_\_\_\_ formed by a \_\_\_\_\_ of curtains.

48-50. The Tabernacle represents \_\_\_\_\_ presence and men shut out from \_\_\_\_\_ presence and fellowship because of \_\_\_\_\_.

51. The white linen used in the Tabernacle court symbolizes \_\_\_\_\_.

52. The brass used in the Tabernacle symbolizes \_\_\_\_\_.

53. The one entrance into the court of the Tabernacle signifies what?

54-56. In the Tabernacle blue thread signifies Christ's \_\_\_\_\_ origin, and scarlet thread signifies Christ's \_\_\_\_\_, and purple signifies Christ's position as \_\_\_\_\_.

57. The brazen altar signified Christ's \_\_\_\_\_.

58-59. Footwashing signifies that the Christian needs only one bath of \_\_\_\_\_, but he needs the daily cleansing of the Word of God to maintain his \_\_\_\_\_ with the Savior.

60. The Laver was made out of brass \_\_\_\_\_.

61. The silver in the Tabernacle represents the price of \_\_\_\_\_.

62. The light of the Candlestick depicts Jesus giving \_\_\_\_\_ to men.
63. The bread in the Tabernacle pictures \_\_\_\_\_.
64. The altar of incense depicts \_\_\_\_\_.
- 65-67. The Greek word translated “mercy seat” is also translated \_\_\_\_\_, which means \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
- 68-69. The High Priest entered the Holy of Holies \_\_\_\_\_ a year, thus signifying the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ’s atonement.
70. The tall thick curtain in the Tabernacle that was torn from top to bottom, depicting the fact that salvation is entirely a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
- 71-73. The burnt offering depicted Christ’s utter \_\_\_\_\_ to God which was well pleasing to God and the believer’s \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ and the believer’s \_\_\_\_\_ to God in Christ.
- 74-75. The meal offering typifies Christ in His human \_\_\_\_\_ tested by \_\_\_\_\_.
76. The peace offering typifies Christ in His death making \_\_\_\_\_ between God and man and the believer enjoying this \_\_\_\_\_ with God.
77. The sin offering typifies Christ as our \_\_\_\_\_.
78. The ox in the offerings depicts Christ as the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
79. The sheep depicts Christ’s \_\_\_\_\_ to suffer on the Cross.
80. The dove or pigeon depicts Christ as the \_\_\_\_\_ man’s Saviour.
81. The burn offerings depict \_\_\_\_\_ to God.
82. The anointing with oil depicts the \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_.
- 83-84. The ephod was placed over the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the high priest.
- 85-86. What is the meaning of Urim and Thummin?
87. What did the Urim and Thummin look like?

# STUDYING BIBLE DIFFICULTIES

There are things in the Bible that can be understood by a child, but there are also hard passages in the Bible. Peter referred to these as follows:

*“And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; IN WHICH ARE SOME THINGS HARD TO BE UNDERSTOOD, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:15-16).*

**1. The Bible is God’s Word.** *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9).* It is not surprising that the Bible contains things hard to be understood. It is the revelation of the omniscient, omnipotent, eternal God, and we are but puny, fallen men.

**2. We are separated from Bible events by thousands of years and vast cultural and linguistic differences.** God gave the Scriptures for all people of all centuries and He was in control of the time and context of its giving; but at the same time, it is unreasonable to expect there will be no problems in understanding a book written so long ago and in such a different cultural climate.

**3. Some things are purposely hidden from the willful unbeliever (Mat. 13:13-17).** God will not be mocked. He has designed His Word in such a way that those who willfully reject Him are unable to discern the truth properly. George DeHoff wisely notes, “Even when there are several explanations for an alleged discrepancy (any one of which could be the truth) skeptics claim to be unable to find any of them.”

**4. Proper Bible understanding requires spiritual perception (1 Cor. 2:12-15; 3:1-3; Heb. 5:11-14).** The unsaved and the spiritually immature find great inconsistencies in the Bible, because they lack the spiritual discernment that is required to properly understand the Scriptures. This is not God’s fault; it is the fault of the one who has not sought God in a proper

manner. 2 Corinthians 3:16 says that when the heart turns to the Lord, God removes the veil of spiritual blindness. Likewise, Proverbs 1:23 says, *“Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.”* Jesus gives light to every man (Jn. 1:9) and is ready and willing to give more light if the individual will respond. *“Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light”* (Eph. 5:14).

**5. God requires man to study (2 Tim. 2:15; Prov. 2:1-6; 25:2).** The Bible does not read like a morning newspaper or a children’s storybook because it is not a morning newspaper or a children’s storybook! It is the eternal Word of God, and God has ordained that a man must dig into it diligently or he will not understand it properly. The chief solution to Bible difficulties is diligent, believing STUDY of the Holy Scriptures!

**6. The Bible is for all men and all times.** It is possible that some things are difficult to understand because God intended that they be better understood by someone else in another situation. Many of the prophetic discourses fall into this category (Dan. 12:4). Even godly men have not understood prophecy well until these last days.

## **RULES FOR SOLVING BIBLE DIFFICULTIES**

The following important rules of Bible interpretation can help the Bible student solve the most difficult problems. We have covered these earlier in this course.

1. Context is all important in defining words and interpreting passages.
2. Clear passages must interpret the less clear.
3. Scripture must be compared with Scripture.
4. The literal sense of Scripture must rule.
5. The Bible must be allowed to define its own figurative language.
6. Parables do not define doctrine, but illustrate doctrine.
7. God’s revelation to man in the Scriptures is progressive in nature.
8. The Gospels and Acts are transitional.
9. Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles.
10. The Bible must be studied dispensationally.
11. Old Testament parallelism must be understood.
12. If two or more interpretations are supported by the passage, both might be correct.
13. What the Bible does not say is as important as what it does say.

14. Caution and careful study solve most problems.

## **TYPES OF BIBLE DIFFICULTIES**

The following are a few examples of problems in the Bible. From these examples we can see the various categories of problems and we can also learn how to handle a wide variety of problems. For a more exhaustive study on Bible difficulties, see the book *Things Hard to Be Understood: A Handbook of Biblical Difficulties*, available from Way of Life Literature.

## **MISCELLANEOUS DIFFICULTIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

### **GENESIS 20:16**

**What did Abimelech mean when he said to Sarah that Abraham “is to thee a covering of the eyes”?** This passage is interpreted in several different ways, but most commentators follow versions of the Bible that give a different meaning of this verse from the King James Bible. I believe the distinguished King James translators gave the proper rendering of the verse and the correct meaning is found simply by following it. Abimelech was reproving Sarah. He did this in two ways. First, he called Abraham “thy brother,” thus reminding her of her deception. Second, he instructed her that Abraham, as her husband, is all the covering and protection she needs. It is Abraham who is the covering for Sarah, not the 1,000 pieces of silver. Matthew Poole has a good note on the phrase “he is to thee a covering of the eyes”—i.e. “a protection to thee from the wanton eyes and attempts of others, whilst they know thee to be the wife of another man, and he such a one whom they reverence and fear; and therefore thou didst take a very wrong course to disown him, whereby thou didst expose thyself to great danger.”

### **2 SAMUEL 6:6-7**

**Why did God kill Uzzah for only touching the ark?** God judged Uzzah because the ark was not being handled according to the instructions in His Law. Though David at first was upset with God for killing Uzzah, he later acknowledged in 1 Chronicles 15:13 that they had sinned in disobeying God’s Law, “... *for that we sought him not after the due order.*” Only the Levites were to carry the Tabernacle and its articles (Num. 4:15; 7:9). By putting the ark on a cart drawn by animals (2 Sam. 6:3), the Israelites were imitating the methods

employed by the heathen Philistines (1 Sam. 6:7-11). When David later attempted again to return the ark to its appointed place, he did it properly by having it carried upon the shoulders of the Levites (1 Chronicles 15:11-15). We must also note that Uzzah was not merely an innocent bystander. His father, Abinadab, was the high priest in charge of the ark; and Uzzah had served in the presence of the ark, which had been located at Abinadab's house for 20 years (2 Sam. 6:3; 1 Sam. 7:1-2).

## **JUDGES 4:4-5**

**Why did God make Deborah a judge in Israel?** The answer is not difficult. God's perfect will is for men to lead. That is clear in Scripture, but when men will not assume their responsibilities, God sometimes uses women. The men in Deborah's day were very weak. This is seen in the fact that Barak, the captain of the armies of Israel, refused to go into battle unless Deborah went with him (Jud. 4:8). What a man! The woman had to remind him that God had said it is time to fight; the woman had to encourage and challenge him to go; yea, the woman had to go with him (Jud. 4:9). It was a period in Israel's history during which God could find no man to do His will, so He used a brave, willing woman.

The root problem in Deborah's day was spiritual apostasy. When God's people turn away from Him, He renders the men powerless against their enemies and removes wisdom from their hearts. It is a judgment upon apostate people. We can see this very thing today in apostate North America, England, and Europe. The leaders are weak and seem lacking even in basic common sense. We cannot control our little children and women rule over us (compare Isa. 3:12). This is God's judgment because of the apostate condition of the churches. Israel in Deborah's day was in bondage to their enemies because of their apostasy from the true God and His revealed will recorded in Scripture (Jud. 4:1-2). This was why the men were so weak. God had removed their power as He did from sinful Samson.

We must also note that there was no specific injunction against women leaders in the Mosaic dispensation as there is in the churches today as outlined in the New Testament Epistles. See 1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:11-14; 3:4-5; Titus 1:6. Thus, to use Deborah as an example of a woman preacher or a female church leader is to misuse the Scripture.



## **DIFFICULTIES PERTAINING TO ALLEGED OR SEEMING CONTRADICTIONS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

### **GENESIS 1-2**

**Is there a contradiction between Genesis 1 and 2?** Genesis one says the animals were created on the sixth day, before the man was made (Gen. 1:24-31). Genesis two says God made the man and then made the animals and brought them to him to be named (Gen. 2:18-19). The seeming contradiction disappears when one considers that the two accounts are meant to be complementary. They give two different perspectives to the account of creation. In chapter one the Holy Spirit looks on the big picture and at the general events which occurred in the six days of creation. In chapter two He focuses in on man's creation and He gives us the details of how man was actually formed. Genesis 2:19 does not say that God made the animals after He made the man. It simply states that He made the animals for the man. Genesis 1:24-25 tells us precisely when the animals were made. The supplemental information in Genesis 2 does not contradict this, but complements it.

### **GENESIS 26:34**

### **GENESIS 28:9**

### **GENESIS 36:2-3**

**Why do the wives of Esau have different names?** The three wives of Esau are mentioned in Genesis 26:34 and 28:9. The second mention of the same wives, in Genesis 36:2-3, gives different names for the wives. The solution to this problem lies in the frequent use of different names for the same person in biblical times. "There is perfect agreement, at least to the facts that there were three wives, and that two were Canaanites, while one was the daughter of Ishmael. It was a common custom for both men and women to have two or more names, as very many instances in Scripture show, the names often being changed in commemoration of some event in the life, and even at the present day, in the East, women frequently change their names on the occasion of their marriage. Bashemath and Mahalath, then, are evidently two names borne by Ishmael's daughter; and, as both lists agree in representing one of the wives as the daughter of Elon the Hittite, there is no difficulty in considering that she bore both names of Adah and Bashemath. . . . Possibly other facts, if known, would give a different solution; but we have no right to assume a mistake on the part of the writer when an explanation is possible" (A. McCaig).

## **EXODUS 2:18**

## **EXODUS 3:1**

## **NUMBERS 10:29**

**In Exodus 2:18 Moses' father-in-law is called Reuel; in Exodus 3:1 he is called Jethro; and in Numbers 10:29, Raguel.** A number of explanations have been given for this seeming discrepancy. (1) Some have argued that Jethro was actually Reuel's son and the brother-in-law of Moses. Those who support this view argue that Reuel would have been dead by the time Moses was called of God in Exodus 3. These also point to the Hebrew word translated "father in law" and note that it could be translated in other ways. This is true enough. The same Hebrew word is translated "marriages" (Deut. 7:3), "mother in law" (Deut. 27:23), "son in law" (1 Sam. 18:21), and "join in affinity" (1 Ki. 3:1; 2 Ch. 18:1; Ezr. 9:14). The problem with this argument is that it requires a correction in the text of the King James Bible, which is unnecessary. To say that Reuel would have been dead by the time Moses received God's call in the burning bush (Ex. 3), 40 years after they met, is mere speculation. The Bible indicates plainly that he was alive and that he later visited Israel in their wilderness wanderings (Ex. 18:1-27). (2) There is a simple explanation for the seeming discrepancy. First, the names "Reuel" and "Raguel" are translated from the same Hebrew word. In other words, they are the same name. Second, the name "Jethro" "is not a proper name, but simply a title of honor, denoting 'excellency'" (Haley). This name is used in the context of him being called "the priest of Midian." We believe the matter is answered in this way. Moses' father-in-law's name was Reuel (or Raguel) and his title was Jethro.

## **EXODUS 9:6**

## **EXODUS 9:8-9**

## **EXODUS 9:20**

**If all cattle were killed in the fifth plague, why do we see cattle affected in the sixth and seventh plagues?** What is the explanation for this? (1) It is probable that the fifth plague affected only the cattle that were in the fields. "*Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle WHICH IS IN THE FIELD, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: there shall be a very grievous murrain*" (Exodus 9:3). Cattle that were in barns or otherwise protected from the elements were not affected. (2) "We are not informed as to how long an interval there may have been between verses

7 and 8. The Egyptians may have restocked with cattle during that interval by purchasing from the Israelites or the neighboring countries” (Pettingill).

## **EXODUS 33:7**

**What Tabernacle was pitched in Exodus 32?** In this passage we are told that the Tabernacle was pitched after the breaking of the first tables of the Law (Exodus 32:15-20) and before the second tables of the Law were made and Moses went back up to the meet God on the mountain (Exodus 34:1-2). Yet in Exodus 35-36 we see that the Tabernacle was not made until after Moses returned from his second trip to the top of the mountain (Exodus 34:28-35). Modernists have claimed that this apparent discrepancy was caused by the combining of various documents to form the Pentateuch, but Christ and the apostles verified the Mosaic authorship and authority of the Pentateuch (Lk. 24:44; Jn. 5:45-47; Acts 13:39; 15:1, 5, 21; 21:21; 26:22; 28:23; 1 Cor. 9:9).

How, though, can we explain the seeming discrepancy about the Tabernacle? We believe the most likely explanation is that the passages refer to two different tabernacles. The word “tabernacle” merely means a tent. In the Authorized Version the same Hebrew word is translated “home,” “dwelling,” “covering,” and “tent.” A. McCaig, former principal of the Pastors’ College connected with the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, gives this comment: “It is at once evident that the Tent thus mentioned is not the Tabernacle afterwards reared, but a particular tent, in all probability the tent of Moses, whereon, before the building of the Tabernacle, the glory of the Lord rested. Evidently, because of the displeasure of the Lord on account of His people’s sin, Moses now takes his tent outside the camp, as an indication of that displeasure, and he calls it the ‘Tent of Meeting,’ signifying that there God would meet with those who sought His face.”

## **NUMBERS 25:9**

### **1 CORINTHIANS 10:8**

**Were 23,000 killed in the plague, or were 24,000 killed?** “In order to reconcile these statements, it may be observed that (1) perhaps twenty-three thousand fell directly by the plague, and one thousand were slain by Phinehas and his companions [Num. 25:4-8] (Grotius); or (2) it may be that the number was between twenty-three and twenty-four thousand, and it might be expressed in round numbers by either (Macknight). ... The probable supposition is, that the three and twenty thousand fell immediately by the hand of God in the plague,

and the other thousand by the judges; and as Paul's design was particularly to mention the proofs of the immediate divine displeasure, he refers only to those who fell by that, in illustration of his subject" (Barnes).

### **1 SAMUEL 16:8-11**

### **1 CHRONICLES 2:13-15**

**The passage in Samuel seems to indicate that Jesse had eight sons, whereas Chronicles lists only seven.** (1) It is possible that the later omits a son who died early and did not grow up to maturity. (2) It is also possible that the eighth son died without children and was therefore omitted from the official genealogy in Chronicles. The genealogies are written to give father-son, father-son lineage. If a man did not have children, there would be no reason to list him in a genealogy.

### **1 SAMUEL 18:19**

### **2 SAMUEL 6:23**

### **2 SAMUEL 21:8**

There are two seeming discrepancies here: **Michal is said not to have had children, yet we read that she brought up five sons. The wife of Adriel was Merab, not Michal. Why, then, does 2 Samuel 21:8 say that it was Michal who brought up Adriel's sons?** Many commentators have claimed that there is a copyist's mistake in 2 Samuel 21:8, and that it should read "Merab" instead of "Michal." We do not believe this is the case. The solution to the apparent problem is simply to believe what the Bible says. The passage does not say that Michal bore these five sons; it says she brought them up. It appears that Merab bore the sons, was then incapacitated or died, and then Michal, denied children of her own, raised her sister's sons in her stead.

### **1 SAMUEL 28:6**

### **1 CHRONICLES 10:14**

Some see a contradiction between these two accounts of Saul's life. **Samuel says Saul inquired of the Lord, but the Lord refused to answer him. Chronicles says Saul did not inquire of the Lord.** The answer to this problem is to understand that the passages are simply looking at Saul's life in two different ways. Chronicles is not saying that Saul never one time prayed in his entire life. It is saying that Saul did not sincerely seek God and His will. His

prayer, described by Samuel, was insincere, as the Scriptures plainly tell us. Saul had already rejected God's Word as spoken to him by Samuel.

#### **1 SAMUEL 31:4-6**

#### **2 SAMUEL 1:1-10**

#### **2 SAMUEL 21:12**

#### **1 CHRONICLES 10:13, 14**

**Who killed Saul?** 1 Samuel 31 says he killed himself. In 2 Samuel 1 the Amalekite claims to have killed him. In 2 Samuel 21 the Philistines are said to have killed him. 1 Chronicles 10 says God killed him. The answer probably is that the Amalekite was lying, in an attempt to gain favor with David, while the three other passages explain in different ways how Saul died. (1) He died by his own hand because he committed suicide. (2) He died by the hand of God because his death was God's judgment. (3) And he died by the hands of the Philistines, because they are the ones Saul was fighting that day and they inflicted the deadly wound that resulted in him taking his own life.

#### **2 SAMUEL 8:4**

#### **1 CHRONICLES 18:4**

**Samuel says David took 700 horsemen, whereas Chronicles says 7,000 horsemen.** The apparent discrepancy in the number of horsemen probably arises because the passages count the conquered military in two different ways. "If they divided their horses by ten in a company, as it is probable they did, the captains and companies were 700, but the horsemen were 7000" (Matthew Henry).

#### **2 SAMUEL 8:13**

#### **1 CHRONICLES 18:12**

**Who won the victory, David or Abishai?** The apparent contradiction dissolves when we understand that 2 Samuel ascribes the victory to David, because he was king of all Israel's forces, whereas 1 Chronicles attributes the victory to the military leader directly connected with the campaign, Abishai, General Joab's brother.

## **2 SAMUEL 14:27**

## **2 SAMUEL 18:18**

### **One passage says Absalom had sons; the other says he had no son.**

It appears that Absalom's sons all died, and he was therefore left without a son to bear his name.

## **2 SAMUEL 23:8**

## **1 CHRONICLES 11:11**

**2 Sam. 23 says 800 were killed, while 1 Chron. 11 says 300.** Many claim this is a contradiction caused by a copyist error. William Pettingill, for example, in *Bible Questions Answered*, says, "These are very obviously instances of copyists' errors." We fail to see that this is so obvious. To say that there is a copyist error is mere conjecture. There is no evidence that the Hebrew text is corrupt here apart from the apparent contradiction. The textual evidence supports the translation as we have it in the KJV. Even the modern versions retain the same numbers in these verses. The NIV, for example, says 800 were slain in 2 Samuel 23:8 and 300 were slain in 1 Chronicles 11:11.

How, then, do we solve the problem? There are a number of possible solutions, and we will mention three.

First, it is possible that the exploits of two different men are described. Samuel describes the feats of Adino, who slew 800 at one time. Chronicles describes the feats of Jashobeam, who slew 300 at one time. One is called a Tachmonite; the other a Hachmonite. The fact that they are both listed as chief of the captains would seem to point to one man, but it could be that two men held this position at different times. That would not be unusual. Second, it is also possible that both passages refer to one man who performed two very remarkable exploits, one of which is described by Samuel; the other, by Chronicles. Third, it is further possible that a singular exploit is described in two different ways. Samuel perhaps counts the entire number of soldiers slain by Adino during an entire day of battle; whereas Chronicles perhaps counts only the number of soldiers slain during the first part of that battle or only the number of chief men slain, etc. These possibilities are far more reasonable than to claim that God failed to preserve His Word and allowed mistakes to enter in.

## **2 SAMUEL 24:13**

## **1 CHRONICLES 21:11-12**

**Samuel says seven years, while Chronicles says three.** As is the case with many biblical difficulties, no one knows for certain why there is a difference between these passages, but the Hebrew text is properly translated in the KJV in both passages and we can be certain that the problem is with our understanding and not with the Word of God. The following comments by Gleason Archer pose a reasonable solution: “Note the wording here [1 Chron. 21:11-12] is significantly different from that of 2 Samuel 24:13. Rather than the simple question as in 2 Samuel, we have it given here in 1 Chronicles as an alternative imperative (‘Thus saith the LORD, Choose thee either three years’ famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee; or else three days the sword of the LORD...’). From this we may reasonably conclude that 2 Samuel records the first approach of Gad to David, in which the alternative prospect was seven years; the Chronicles account gives us the second and final approach of Nathan to the king, in which the Lord (doubtless in response to David’s earnest entreaty in private prayer) reduced the severity of that grim alternative to three years rather than an entire span of seven” (Gleason, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, p. 190).

## **2 SAMUEL 24:24**

## **1 CHRONICLES 21:25**

**Did David pay 50 shekels or 600?** The answer is that both figures are true. At first David purchased only the threshingfloor and oxen for 50 shekels of silver. Later he purchased the entire hill for 600 shekels of gold for the building of the temple. 2 Chronicles 3:1 explains that this is Mt. Moriah, the same place where God directed Abraham to offer Isaac, and where God provided a ram in his stead (Gen. 22:3). Thus, we see that God had His eye upon this place from the beginning in preparation for the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here in Jerusalem, as Abraham prophesied long ago, God “provided Himself a lamb” (Gen. 22:8). As for **the apparent contradiction in the names of the Jebusite owner** of the threshingfloor, (1) it is possible that he had two names, Araunah and Ornan. (2) It is also possible that two different men were involved, one who owned the threshingfloor, the other who owned the entire hill.

## **1 KINGS 4:26**

## **1 KINGS 10:26**

## **2 CHRONICLES 9:25**

It is evident that Solomon had 12,000 horsemen, but there appears to be a discrepancy in the number of horses he had for his chariots. **Kings says 40,000 and Chronicles, 4,000.** The King James Bible follows the God-honored Massoretic Hebrew text here, as did its distinguished predecessors: Tyndale, Geneva, etc. Many commentators, because of the seeming discrepancy, claim there is a copyist's mistake here in Kings, and that this passage should read 4,000 instead of 40,000, but we do not accept that. The solution might be found in the different wording of 1 Kings 4:26 and 2 Chronicles 9:25. The former says "stalls of horses," while the latter says "stalls of horses and chariots." Thus, perhaps the Bible is telling us that Solomon had 40,000 stalls for his horses, while he had only 4,000 stalls of some sort that held both horses and chariots.

## **1 KINGS 6:2**

## **1 KINGS 6:16-17**

**One verse says the house was 60 cubits; the other says 40 cubits.**

The answer to this problem is that the temple itself was 40 cubits (verse 17) whereas the overall length of the temple including the porch was 60 cubits (verse 2), the porch being 20 cubits (verse 16).

## **1 KINGS 7:26**

## **2 CHRONICLES 4:5**

**Did the container hold 3,000 baths, or 2,000?** "The Hebrew verb rendered 'contained' and 'held' is different from that translated 'received'; and the meaning may be that the sea ordinarily contained 2000, but when filled to its utmost capacity received and held 3000 baths" (John Haley).

## **1 KINGS 9:28**

## **2 CHRONICLES 8:18**

**How much gold was brought from Ophir? 420 talents, or 450?** There appears to be a contradiction between these accounts, but actually we have the account of two different trips to Ophir. In 1 Kings 9:26 we find that the journey was made with Solomon's ships. In 2 Chronicles 8:18, the journey was made



with Hiram's ships.

## **2 KINGS 17:24-34**

**Verse 32 says the Samaritan people feared the Lord, and verse 34 says they did not fear the Lord.** The meaning is clear in the context. They feared the Lord in one sense only—in the sense of adding him to their other gods and following some semblance of His worship in order to escape His judgment in the form of the ravening lions. But they did not fear the Lord truly in the sense of worshipping Him alone as God and obeying His revealed precepts. They merely intermingled Jehovah worship with their idolatry.

## **1 CHRONICLES 3:22**

**The verse says there were six sons of Shemaiah, but it lists only five.** (1) “Jewish critics say that one son died in infancy” (John Haley). (2) Another possible answer to this problem is that the text includes Shemaiah himself with the total.

## **MISCELLANEOUS DIFFICULTIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

### **Difficulties caused by apparent doctrinal disharmonies**

These problems are largely created by the misapplication of passages by false teachers. Examples are attempts to “prove” that Christ is not God or that baptism is necessary for salvation or that the believer is not eternally secure in Christ or that death is not a journey. The book *Things Hard to Be Understood: A Handbook of Biblical Difficulties*, which is available from Way of Life Literature, covers many examples of this type of problem.

### **Difficulties caused by the use of the wrong Greek New Testament**

The critical Greek text underlying the modern Bible versions creates many problems. Following is one example:

## **MATTHEW 5:22**

**In Matthew 5:22 the modern versions omit the words “without a cause.”** The NIV says, “But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother

will be subject to judgment,” whereas the KJV reads, “whosoever is angry with his brother WITHOUT A CAUSE shall be in danger of the judgment...” This “little” omission creates a serious error, because Christ Himself was angry at times. Mark 3:5 says, “And when he had looked round about on them WITH ANGER...” To be angry is not necessarily a sin, but to be angry “without a cause” is.

## **Difficulties caused by not understanding the biblical culture and times**

### **JOHN 2:4**

**Was Jesus being disrespectful to His mother by calling her “woman”?** Actually this was not a term of disrespect, as it would be today. It was a term of respect and is the same Greek word commonly translated “wife” (Acts 18:2). Christ used the same term to address his mother at the cross in John 19:26, and the woman of faith in Matthew 15:28.

## **Difficulties caused by apparent disharmonies in the Gospels and Acts**

Following are some of the principles peculiar to interpreting difficulties in the Gospels:

1. It is important to understand that the Holy Spirit did not give a linear account of Christ’s life. This is why it is so difficult to form a synthesis of the four Gospels. The Lord Jesus Christ preached and ministered for three years, and doubtless He repeated many things on different occasions, sometimes using slightly different expressions. If a preacher gives the same illustration repeatedly, it is common for him to vary the way he describes it. If his sermons are recorded and transcribed, no two accounts of the same illustration would be word for word the same. This explains many of the apparent discrepancies in the Gospels. For example, Christ’s sermon to the Pharisees in Matthew 23 was delivered to “the multitude” (Matt. 23:1), but He said some of the same things on at least one other occasion, when He was in the home of a Pharisee (Luke 11:37-54).

2. The Gospels often give complementary information about the same account. For example, all four Gospels mention the sign that Pilate put on the cross, but none of them give the entire message that was inscribed on it. To get the full

inscription we have to compare all four accounts as follows:

“This is Jesus the King of the Jews” Matt. 27:37

“The King of the Jews” Mk. 15:26

“This is the King of the Jews” Lk. 23:38

“Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews” Jn. 19:19

By comparing the accounts, we see that the complete title on the sign was “This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews.”

## **MATTHEW 1:8**

### **1 CHRONICLES 3:11**

**Is Joram the father of Uzziah, as in Matthew 1:8, or Ahaziah, as in 1 Chronicles 3:11?** “Ahaziah was apparently the immediate son of Joram, and Uzziah was a distant ‘son’ (descendant). Just as the word ‘son’ in the Bible also means grandson, even so the term ‘begot’ can be used of a father or grandfather. Matthew, therefore, is not giving a complete chronology, but an abbreviated genealogy of Christ’s ancestry. A comparison of Matthew 1:8 and 1 Chronicles 3:11-12 reveals the three generations between Joram and Uzziah (Azariah)” (Geisler and Howe).

## **MATTHEW 2:13-23**

### **LUKE 2:22-39**

**Some find a contradiction between these two accounts, Matthew saying that the young Jesus was taken into Egypt following the visit of the wise men and only after that was he taken to Nazareth, while Luke indicates that Jesus was brought to Nazareth after the purification and nothing is said about Egypt.** There is no contradiction in the actual accounts, though, unless one reads something into the passages that is not there. Luke does not say that Jesus did not go to Egypt. That it is not mentioned does not mean that he is saying it did not happen. Luke merely tells us that Jesus was brought to Nazareth without telling us about some prior events. The trip to Egypt is left out, not being relevant to Luke’s account.

It is also probable that the two accounts describe different periods in the life of the child Jesus. Luke 2 describes the infancy of Jesus in the manger in Bethlehem (v. 7). Matthew 2 describes the child Jesus when he is a little older,

because the wise men in Matthew 2 find Jesus in a house (v. 11), instead of in a manger. Matthew 2 does not specifically say that they found Jesus in Bethlehem; the star led them to the “young child” and it could have been in Nazareth. That Jesus could have been as old as two years by this point in time is hinted at in the action of Herod. He ordered the murder of male babies two years old and younger (Matt. 2:16). Obviously, he had reason to believe that Jesus was that old. The following is the possible timeline: Jesus was born in Bethlehem, was presented in Jerusalem 40 days later (Lk 1:22), was then carried to Nazareth (Lk. 1:39), where he was worshipped by the wise men. From there Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt when Herod sought to kill all of the male children (Matt. 1:11-15). When that danger was over, they returned to Nazareth following the death of Herod (Matt. 1:19-23).

A question has also been raised about **why the young John the Baptist was not killed during the slaughter of infants under Herod**. The answer is obviously that either God hid him or that his parents, too, were warned to flee the area. The same God that protected Jesus protected His forerunner, though God did not choose to record it in Scripture.

#### **MATTHEW 8:28-29**

#### **MARK 5:1-2**

**Matthew describes two demon-possessed men who were liberated by Christ. Mark 5:1-20 and Luke 8:26-39 describe only one man.** The conflict between the accounts is only apparent, though, when we fail to understand the relationship between the passages. Matthew looks at this account in a general, overall sense. Mark and Luke focus on one of the men. Obviously two men were involved, as Matthew tells us, but the Holy Spirit chose to give the details of only one of these. It is possible that only one responded in faith to Christ after the demons were cast out.

#### **MATTHEW 10:29**

#### **LUKE 12:6**

**Matthew says two sparrows; Luke says five sparrows.** The Holy Spirit did not necessarily give a linear account of Christ's life. This is why it is so difficult to form a synthesis of the four Gospels. The Lord Jesus Christ preached and ministered for three years, and doubtless He repeated many things, sometimes using slightly different expressions. If a preacher gives the same illustration repeatedly, it is common for him to vary the way he describes it. If

his sermons are recorded and transcribed, no two accounts of the same illustration would be word for word the same. This explains many of the apparent discrepancies in the Gospels.

#### **MATTHEW 26:34**

#### **MARK 14:30**

**Did Peter deny Jesus before the cock crowd once, or twice?** Both accounts say Peter would deny the Lord three times. Matthew, Luke, and John merely say the denials will be “before the cock crow.” Mark alone adds the detail of the specific number of times the cock would crow—“twice”—whereas the other accounts only mention the cock crowing in a general sense. It is plain in Mark 14:68-72 that the cock did crow one time before Peter denied the Lord the third time.

#### **MATTHEW 27:5-8**

#### **ACTS 1:18-19**

**Did Judas hang himself or did he fall and burst asunder? Did he throw the money back to the leaders or did he purchase a field with it?** “Judas may have hanged himself on some high tree or on a precipice, and then by the rope or the branch breaking, he fell down and was dashed to pieces. Matthew merely relates the remorse and suicide of Judas; Luke, the end of the tragedy. Acts 1:18 says he purchased a field, which means no more than that he was the cause of a field being purchased, and this would agree with the chief priests buying the potter’s field (Matthew 27:6-8) and with Zechariah 11:12,13. He did it as it were by proxy, the priests did it for him with his money” (*Bible Handbook*).

#### **MATTHEW 27:37**

#### **MARK 15:26**

#### **LUKE 23:38**

#### **JOHN 19:19**

**What were the words on the sign above the cross?** Some have claimed that there is a contradiction between the various accounts of the sign which Pilate placed on the cross. Actually in the individual accounts the Holy Spirit focuses on a portion of the entire title. The full title that was written was, “THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

## **ACTS 9:7**

## **ACTS 22:9**

**In Acts 9:7 we are told the men with him heard “a voice,” but in Acts 22:9, we are told they heard not “the voice.”** The solution to this problem lies in the articles which precede “voice.” The men with Paul heard something, “a voice,” but they did not understand the words that were spoken. They heard a noise but they could not distinguish the words that were addressed by the Lord to Paul. Acts 2:9 does not deny that the associates of Paul heard certain sounds; it simply declares that they did not hear in such a way as to understand what was being said.

A. McCaig made an important observation about the tendency of some men to see mistakes in the Bible. “When we meet with seeming discrepancies in other writers, we try to find some way of explaining them without charging the author with inaccuracy, especially if he has shown himself generally trustworthy. With regard to many matters in ancient history which cannot be satisfactorily explained, we suppose that if other facts were known to us, the difficulties would be cleared away. But, unfortunately, it is the habit of many to treat the Scriptures in exactly the reverse way. They magnify the difficulties; they ignore or reject all attempts at explanation; they jump at once to the conclusion that the writers are mistaken. Now, surely this is most unscientific. If it is possible to find a way of explaining the difficulty, we are bound to do so; and if, after all, we are not sure that the difficulty is removed, we surely ought, in view of the general trustworthiness of the Bible historians, to believe that if we knew other facts, which are now hidden from us, all would be clear” (A. McCaig).

## **Difficulties caused by the incarnation of Christ**

### **JOHN 14:28**

**How is the Father greater than Christ?** That seeming problem is caused by the fact that Christ took upon himself the form of a servant when he was on earth and this is explained in Philippians 2:7.

### **JOHN 5:19**

**Is Jesus less than the Father?** Christ is here affirming that He, the Son, is in full union, in complete identification, with the Father; that He does nothing without the Father; but all He sees the Father do He does also. These words of

the Lord Jesus do not mean limitation, but attest the complete, perfect unity which is between the Father and the Son. In His relation to the Father, the Son can do nothing independently or separately from the Father. If the Son acted independently of the Father, then He would be another God, which is an impossibility.

## **Miscellaneous Difficulties in the New Testament**

### **MATTHEW 8:11-12**

**Who are the “children of the kingdom”?** They are unbelieving Jews in the nation Israel. One of the key teachings of the Gospels is the rejection of Jesus Christ by His own people, the Jews (John 1:11). Repeatedly Christ warns and rebukes the Jews and their leaders, but most of them reject him. The first half of Matthew, in particular, documents this fearful situation. Matthew 8:12 is contrasted with the verse before, which says that men will come from “*the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.*” This is to say that believers from every part of the earth, who were saved through the preaching of the gospel, will partake in Christ’s kingdom, whereas unbelieving Jews will be rejected.

### **MATTHEW 12:31-32**

**What is the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?** It is the rejection of the Spirit’s testimony that Jesus is the Christ. In essence, it is to reject Christ as Savior. This is the sin committed by the leaders of the nation Israel during Christ’s earthly sojourn. Even though He fulfilled Bible prophecy and performed miracles to authenticate His Messiahship, the leaders rejected Him and ascribed His power to the Devil. Consider the context of Matthew 12:31-32. Christ had cast a demon out of a man and healed him of blindness and muteness (Mat. 12:22). This miracle was so powerful that the people cried out, “*Is not this the son of David?*” (12:23). The Jewish leaders, though, said Christ cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils (12:24). The reason there is no forgiveness for the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is that without Christ there is no forgiveness of sins. If a man rejects Christ, he is without hope. A similar situation is described in Acts 18:6. “*And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.*” The Jews at Corinth rejected Christ and Paul therefore rejected them, knowing there was no hope for them.

## **MATTHEW 15:22**

## **MARK 7:26**

**Was the woman a Canaanite, a Greek, or a Syro-Phenician?** During the time of Christ, Syro-Phenicia was a province of Greece inhabited by the descendants of Canaan. This woman lived in Syro-Phenicia, hence she was a Grecian and a descendant of Canaan. “Can an infidel understand how a Negro born in Mississippi might be called ‘a man of Africa,’ ‘an American’ and ‘a Mississippian’—and be all of them at the same time?” (George DeHoff, *Alleged Bible Contradictions Explained*). A man can also be a Gorkha soldier, a Nepali, and a Gurung, at the same time. Gorkha is a region in Nepal, while Gurung is a tribe of people in Nepal. I was born in Florida and could therefore be called an American, a Southerner (referring to a person who is from the Southeastern part of the United States), and a Florida Cracker (a nickname for a native Floridian).

## **MATTHEW 19:16-17**

**Some claim that in this passage Christ was denying that He was God.** Nothing could be farther from the truth. He claimed to be God, and that is why the Jews sought to kill Him (John 8:58-59; 10:30-31). When the rich young ruler called Him “Good Master,” Christ forced him to think about the implications of what he was saying. If Christ was indeed “Good Master,” He was God. If He was not God, He was not good, because among the children of men “*there are none that doeth good, no, not one*” (Psalm 14:3; Romans 3:12).

## **MATTHEW 19:21**

**Was Jesus saying that men can be saved by keeping the law?** No, Christ used the Law to prepare people’s hearts for salvation (Gal. 3:24). He exposed the sinfulness of man’s heart by explaining the deeper meaning of the Law, that sin is a matter of the heart and not merely a matter of external actions (Matt. 5:21, 22, 31, 32). In Matthew 19:21, the Lord exposed the sinfulness of the heart of the rich young ruler by getting at the root of sin, which is self. The rich young ruler mistakenly thought that he had kept the Law from his youth up (verse 20). The Lord exposed his sin of covetousness and idolatry by requiring that he give up his wealth and comfort and security and follow Him. This was not to say that the rich young ruler could have been saved by doing this. Christ taught that the only “work” we can do for salvation is the “work” of believing on Jesus Christ (John 6:29), but no man can be saved until he first admits his



sinfulness and his need for the Savior (Luke 19:10).

### **MATTHEW 19:30**

**What does it mean that the first shall be last and the last first?** For the answer we must look at the context. The statement was made when Christ answered Peter's question in verse 27, "*Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?*" The Lord told him that the apostles would sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (verse 28), and every one who forsakes houses or lands or relatives for Christ's sake would also be rewarded (verse 29). He then said that many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first (verse 30). This refers to the fact that rewards and position in Christ's kingdom will not be based on WHEN one served Christ or HOW LONG and HOW VISIBLY, but strictly upon the manner in which one serves Christ. The Lord knows all of the secret things, and He will reward not on the basis of how the service appeared to men but how it was in truth before God. Rewards also depend on God's sovereign will. He has the right to reward His own people according to His own will. To further explain Himself, Christ told the parable of the householder (Matthew 20:1-16). This parable immediately follows Matthew 19:30 and was part of the same conversation. The "penny" given to the workers represented a hireling's typical daily wage. The modern American penny, being one one-hundredth of a dollar and having insignificant value, gives the wrong idea. The original Roman penny, the denarius, was a silver coin equal to ten brass coins. It was the common daily wage for a Roman soldier.

There are many applications of this verse. One who is saved at a young age and serves Christ throughout a long life will not necessarily receive more reward than one who is saved later in life and serves Christ for a short time. One who serves Christ throughout a long life will not necessarily receive more reward than one whose life is cut short. One who served Christ during a time of harsh persecution will not necessarily receive more reward than one who served Christ in a time of relative peace. One who served Christ in a prominent position will not necessarily receive more reward than one who served Christ obscurely. We do not know precisely how Christ will reward His people; we know only that it will be based on His Word and that He will be just and gracious.

### **LUKE 9:59-62**

**At first glance, it appears that Christ was forbidding the first man to return home and simply attend the funeral of his father.** It is more

likely that the passage refers to the Jewish custom that a son would care for his father until he dies and then would inherit his wealth. Christ was warning here of two dangers: (1) He was warning of putting worldly security ahead of God's calling. Christ had called the man to follow Him, but instead of obeying, the man was making excuses and putting off the call. Family relationships are important and God's Word instructs us to care for our loved ones (1 Timothy 5:8; Col. 3:18-21). Some of the apostles took their wives with them on their missionary journeys (1 Cor. 9:5). At the same time, the call of God takes precedence over any human relationship. Down through the centuries many have resisted the call of God because of family ties. There are powerful forces at work here. I am reminded of the man who led me to Christ. When God called him to preach, his wife gave him an ultimatum that she would leave him if he did not stop preaching. He pleaded with her to stay, but he refused to stop preaching. Eventually she did leave him and she took their small son with her. He was brokenhearted, but he refused to stop obeying God's command to preach the Word of God. Many, faced with such a choice, have turned their backs to God's calling. *"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple"* (Luke 14:26-27). (2) Christ was also warning of putting off God's call for a more convenient time. It is so easy to excuse oneself from the Lord's service by thinking that it will be easier to obey at a later time. "I will prepare to preach, Lord, when I can afford to do so." "I will tithe, Lord, after I pay off my debts." "I will be faithful to the assembly, Lord, after I complete these various projects and activities which require me to be away on Sundays and Wednesdays." This attitude is a deception. *It is never convenient to serve the Lord.* We must seek FIRST the kingdom of God and His righteousness and when we do, everything else will take care of itself.

The same meaning applies to the second case mentioned by the Lord. The man was not desiring merely to bid farewell to his relatives. That is not forbidden by Scripture. To the contrary, God commands us to honor our parents. When Elisha was called by Elijah, he was not rebuked for saying good-bye to his father and mother (1 Kings 19:19-20). The man was making an excuse for putting off the call of God. He was hesitating. He was doubleminded, and was not willing completely and permanently to cut himself off from his own pursuits. Elisha did say good-bye to his father and mother but he also slew his oxen and burned his farming instruments. He "burned his bridges," so to speak, to the old life and his occupation and pursuits apart from the will of God. When Simon Peter, Andrew,

James, and John were called by the Lord, immediately they left their nets and ships and fathers and followed Him (Matt. 4:18-22). No questions asked. No conditions. No hesitation. This is what the Lord requires.

### **LUKE 10:25-28**

**If salvation is all of grace, and works do not have a part in God's plan of redemption (Eph. 2:8-9), why did Christ answer the lawyer's question in Luke 10:25 as He did? The lawyer asked, “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Christ answered by telling him the story of the good Samaritan. Then He said, “Go, and do thou likewise.” Surely this proves that works play a part in the scheme of salvation.**

The man was seeking to justify himself by keeping the law. He asked, “*What must I do to inherit eternal life?*” He desired to know how to get to Heaven on the ground of “doing.” The Lord’s answer was to convict him, and to show him his inability to be saved on the ground of works. If a man is going to try to get to Heaven by the works of the law, then let him keep the whole law, for if he breaks it even in one point he has broken all and “come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). “*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*” (James 2:10). “*Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed [Christ, Gal. 4:4-5] should come ... Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster*” (Gal. 3:19, 24, 25).

### **JOHN 6:70-71**

**In what sense was Judas a devil?** Some think he was actually a demon in human form, but I do not believe this is the case. The word “devil” is also translated “false accuser” (2 Timothy 3:3) and “slanderer” (1 Timothy 3:11) in the Authorized Version. This is the meaning of the word, and it is in this sense that Judas was a devil. He was controlled by a devil. Soon after this, Satan entered into Judas (John 13:27). If Judas were a demon, this would be a strange situation, for in no other place in Scripture do we read that the Devil enters into a devil. The Lord Jesus called Peter “Satan,” but this does not mean that Peter himself was the Devil (Matt. 16:23).

## ACTS 2:17-18

**What about women prophesying?** The answer is that though God richly gifts women in spiritual things, they are restricted in the exercise thereof. We know that Philip's daughters prophesied, for example, but when God wanted to speak to Paul, He brought a man to do it (Acts 21:8-11). The woman's ministry should be geared toward women and children (1 Tim. 2:15; Titus 2:3-5). It is very instructive that there were no women apostles, and the divine standards for pastors apply only to men (1 Tim. 3:2-4; Titus 1:5-9).

## I TIMOTHY 2:15

**What does it mean that the woman will be saved in child bearing?**

*WHAT THIS DOES NOT MEAN:* 1. It does not promise salvation of a woman's soul through child bearing (Ephesians 2:8-9 teaches that salvation is a free gift). 2. It does not promise escape from the pain of childbirth. Godly women usually suffer as much as others in childbearing. 3. It does not promise that a godly woman will never die in childbirth. Many godly women have died while bearing children.

*WHAT IT DOES MEAN:* The Holy Spirit through Paul is saying that a woman's main ministry and sphere of fruitfulness and reward before God is in rearing children and guiding the home. Paul is using the expression "bear children" in a wider context than we normally do today, referring to the training of the children as well as to the birthing. First, this is proven by the context of the verse. See 1 Timothy 2:11-14. Paul is speaking about woman's spiritual ministry and position. Second, in 1 Timothy 2:15 the pronoun changes from "she" to "they." "They" refers to the children. Paul is saying that women can have effective ministries by rearing children in such a way that the children follow Christ and live godly lives. The Christian woman shall be saved from unfruitfulness through child bearing, if her children continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. Compare Psalm 127:4--*"As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth."* Third, this interpretation is consistent with the teaching of the rest of the New Testament concerning the woman's ministry. See 1 Timothy 5:10, 14; 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15; Titus 2:3-5.

# SUGGESTIONS FOR BIBLE STUDIES

Following are some suggestions for Bible studies which will give the student more experience in using the methods we have learned in this course. In some ways, this is the most important part of the course, because the lessons we have learned will only be useful if they are put into practice.

***Study the Bible with a Bible Survey.*** I suggest that you begin your Bible study career by reading the Bible all the way through as quickly as possible while at the same time reading through a concise Bible survey such as *Halley's Bible Handbook*. Even if you have been reading the Bible for a long time, if you have never gone through a Bible survey course, you should do so. An understanding of each book and how the Bible fits together is absolutely essential. How quickly you accomplish this important task is up to you. It can be done in six months if the student gives enough time to it every day. Or it can take a year or two. No matter how long it takes, you will not regret the effort. In fact, you will be amazed at how much this helps you to better understand the Bible and how much more fruitful your Bible study will be after you have completed this project. Please note, though, that *Halley's Bible Handbook* is not infallible. As with all study books other than the Bible itself, you must test what Halley says with the Word of God. For example, Halley approaches Bible prophecy from a non-committal position, presenting the literal interpretation as well as other interpretations, but he leans toward the non-literal. If you want to use a more serious Bible survey, I suggest H.L. Willmington's *Guide to the Bible*, Warren Wiersbe's *Notes on the Old and New Testament*, or J. Sidlow Baxter's *Explore the Book*.

***Study Important Chapters or Sections of the Bible.*** Following are some suggestions: Genesis 1-3; Exodus 20; Psalm 22; 23; 37; 51; 103; Isaiah 53; Luke 2; Matthew 5-7; Matthew 27; Luke 21; John 3; Acts 2; 8; 13; 15; Romans 1-5; Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 5; 13; 15; Galatians 5; 1 Thessalonians 4; 2 Timothy 3; Hebrews 9-10; Rev. 20. Use the guidelines under the section on "Studying Individual Passages of the Bible."

***Study Five of the Most Important Books of the Bible.*** A most fruitful study is to take some of the most important books of the Bible and go through

them using the guidelines in “Studying the Books of the Bible.” I suggest the following books: Genesis, Exodus, John, Acts, and Romans. A careful study of these books will increase the student’s understanding of the Bible as a whole, of the leading characters of the Old and New Testaments, and of Bible doctrine, and will provide a wealth of practical lessons for Christian living.

**Study Proverbs for Six Months.** *For the first three months* read a chapter a day and mark the different categories, using the previously mentioned marking system: Red for verses dealing with counsel and learning, yellow for the tongue, green for correction, purple for anger and strife, orange for immorality, brown for friendship, blue for child training, a blue circle for verses about the home or family, a penciled circle for those about the sluggard, a green circle for those about the government, a brown circle for those dealing with the poor and poverty, and a purple circle for pride. You will read through Proverbs three times in the first three months, and that will enable you to find most of the individual verses on these topics. *For the last three months*, continue to read one chapter of Proverbs a day and gather together all of the verses dealing with each of the aforementioned categories by copying them down in a notebook. Divide a notebook into 11 sections for this purpose. When you have copied all the verses, go back through the verses under each topic, writing down all of the lessons you can find.

**Study Five Chapters of Psalms a Day.** There are two ways to do this. You can read the Psalms consecutively, the first day reading 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; the second day reading 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, etc. Or you can skip every 30th Psalm, the first day reading Psalm 1, 31, 61, 91, 121; the next day reading Psalm 2, 32, 62, 92, 122, etc.

**Study Psalm 119.** Read Psalm 119 several times and look for the following information. (1) List all of the names that are used in Psalm 119 for the Scriptures (i.e., law of the Lord, testimonies). (2) List the character of the Word of God (i.e., pure, faithful); list the various things that the Word of God does in the believer’s life (i.e., cleanses, empowers, gives light). (3) List the troubles of the man of God. (4) List the promises. (5) List the things the man of God asks for (i.e., deal bountifully with thy servant -- v. 17; open mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law -- v. 18). (6) List the vows of the man of God (i.e., I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when shall have learned thy righteousness -- v. 7; I will keep thy statutes -- v. 8).

***Study the Types of Christ in the Old Testament.*** Using the *Way of Life Encyclopedia* (under the entry on Jesus Christ), study each of the types of Christ in the Old Testament, beginning with the seed of the woman in Genesis 3. Use the Topical Study method.

***Study the Names of Christ.*** A list of the names of Christ can be found in the *Way of Life Encyclopedia*. Go through those and study each one, looking up the references, and writing down the answer to the following questions: What does this name mean? What does this name teach me about Christ? What encouraging thing does this name teach me about my Christian life?

***Study the Book of Acts and the Pastoral Epistles.*** The book of Acts and the books of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus fit together, because one of the themes of all of these books is the church. First read all of these books through, then do an individual book study on each of them, following the guidelines in the chapter on “Studying the Books of the Bible.” By studying them together, the student will see many more lessons than if the books were studied independently.

***Study the Book of Revelation.*** The book of Revelation is the only book in the Bible that promises a special blessing for reading it (Rev. 1:3). Though many find the book to be a puzzle, God gave it to His people to reveal things, not to confuse things! He intends that we understand it. If the student will approach the book of Revelation with a literal principle of interpretation and allow the Holy Spirit Himself to interpret the symbols, the book becomes clear. Use the guidelines in the section on “Studying Individual Books of the Bible” and you will find tremendous benefit from this important book.

***Study the doctrinal words of the New Testament.*** Using the four-point word study method discussed in the chapter on “Using Bible Study Tools,” analyze the following important doctrinal words: believe, repentance, law, grace, justification, propitiation, redemption, adoption, hope, born again (born of the Spirit, born of God, new creature, regeneration, new man), reconcile, impute, blood, atonement, gospel, glory, mercy, mystery, election (foreordain, foreknow, predestinate), eternal life.

***Study the Prophets and Divide the Prophecies into Categories.*** You can use colored pencils for marking the categories. First, bracket unfulfilled prophecy or future events in red, then use brown for verses pertaining to the Day of the Lord, light blue for the Messianic passages, green for passages

referring the remnant, orange for the New Covenant, dark blue for the regathering of Israel, yellow for passages describing the millennial kingdom, and red for the second coming. You should probably take the Advanced Bible Studies Course on “Understanding Bible Prophecy” before tackling this study.

***Spend Six Months Reading some of the Shorter Books of the New Testament once a day for one month each.*** In other words, read the book of Philippians every day for a month, then the book of Colossians, then 1 Thessalonians, then 2 Thessalonians, then 1 Timothy, then 2 Timothy, then 1 John. At the end of each month, spend a few days outlining that book and studying it via the Book Study Method.

***Study the Life of Christ in the Four Gospels.*** Find the key events of His life and place them in order from the virgin birth to the ascension. List lessons about Christ’s character.

***Study the Parables of Christ.*** Study each of the parables of Christ. (They are listed in this book under the section on “Studying Bible Parables.”) If the parable is in more than one Gospel, carefully read each account. Then write down the answers to the following questions: What was the setting for this parable? Who was Christ speaking to when He told the parable? If the parable is contained in more than one Gospel, ask yourself, what are the differences, if any, between the various accounts of the parable? What is the main thing that Jesus was teaching through this parable? What are the main lessons of the parable for my Christian life?

***Study the Miracles of Christ.*** Study each of the miracles of Christ. (A list of them can be found in the back of many study Bibles and in the *Way of Life Encyclopedia*.) Write down the answers to the following questions pertaining to each miracle: What was the setting for the miracle? Describe the miracle in your own words. What was the response of the people to the miracle? What does this miracle teach me about Christ? What are the lessons for my life?

***Study the Questions of Christ.*** In the Gospel of John alone, Jesus asked more than 30 questions of his listeners, and each of those is instructive. Find and write down each question, then on a sheet of paper answer the following questions: Who was Jesus speaking to? What was the occasion? Why did He ask the question? What was the response of his hearers? What lessons are there for me?



**Study Paul's Prayers.** Starting in Romans 1:8-10, bracket all of Paul's prayers and note in the margin the reference to the prayer that precedes it and the one that follows it. Answer the following questions about each prayer: Who was Paul writing to? Who was he praying for? What did he pray for? What are the characteristics of his prayer? What lessons are there for me?

**Study Key People of Genesis.** The book of Genesis is the book of beginnings and the people who are introduced there are very important for understanding the rest of the Bible. Study each of the main characters of Genesis: Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, using the guidelines under the section on "Studying People of the Bible."

**Study the Miracles of the Old Testament.** There is a list of the miracles in the Way of Life Encyclopedia. Write down the answers to the following questions pertaining to each miracle: What was the setting for the miracle? Describe the miracle in your own words. What was the response of the people to the miracle? Is there any indication as to the purpose for the miracle? What does this miracle teach me about God? What are the lessons for my life?

**Study Key People of the Old Testament.** Study the following individuals: Abraham, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samson, Ruth, Eli, Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, Jeremiah, Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, Esther. Use the guidelines under the section on "Studying People of the Bible."

**Study Women of the Bible.** Go through the Bible and find the key women, starting with Eve, and study their lives with the "Studying People of the Bible" method.

**Study the Judges of Israel.** The lives of the judges of Israel are recorded in the book of Judges and in the first eight chapters of 1 Samuel, and a study of their lives is very instructive. First read the book of Judges and 1 Samuel 1-8 at least two times and mark the first mention of each judge, beginning with Othniel in Judges 3:9, and ending with Samuel in 1 Samuel 1-8. Then study each of the judges using the guidelines under the section on "Studying People of the Bible."

**Study the Kings of Israel.** The lives of Israel's kings are recorded in the books of Samuel and Kings. First, read these books through carefully and mark the beginning and ending of each king's reign. Make a list of the kings of the southern tribes and the kings of the northern tribes (following the division of the kingdom in 1 Kings 12). Make a list of the good kings and the bad kings. Study

each king using the guidelines under the section on “Studying People of the Bible.”

**Study the Little-Known People of the Bible:** Following are some suggestions: Melchizedek (Gen. 14, etc.), Lamech (Gen. 4:19-24); Jethro, Moses father in law (Ex. 3, 4,18); Bezaleel (Ex. 31-38); Rahab (Josh 2, 6); Achan (Josh. 7); Phurah the servant of Gideon (Jud. 7:10); Naomi (Ruth); Boaz (Ruth); Jonathan (1 Samuel); Michal (1 Sam. 14-25); Abigail (1 Sam. 25); Obadiah (1 Ki. 18:1-16); Micaiah (1 Ki. 22; 2 Chron. 18); Mephibosheth (2 Samuel); Uriah (2 Samuel 11-12); Ahithophel (2 Samuel); Barzillai (2 Samuel); the prophet Gad (1, 2 Samuel); David’s mighty men (2 Sam. 23; 1 Chron. 11); Queen of Sheba (1 Ki. 10); the unnamed prophet who cried against the altar of Bethel (1 Ki. 13); Gehazi (2 Kings); the little maid servant of Naaman (2 Ki. 5:1-3); Asaph and his sons (1, 2 Chronicles); Jabez (1 Chron. 4:9-10); the prophet Azariah (1 Chron. 15); Mordecai (Esther); Elihu (Job 32-36); Agur (Proverbs 30); Baruch (Jeremiah); Gedaliah (Jeremiah); the widow that gave all her money (Mk. 12:41-44); the thieves on the cross (Mat. 27:38, 44; Mk. 15:27-28; Lk 23:39-43; Jn. 19:18, 31-35); Simeon (Lk. 2); Anna (Lk. 2); the crooked woman (Lk. 13:11-17); Ananias (Acts 9); the believers mentioned in Romans 16. Since not much is said about each of these people, use the Meditation Study Method and write down all of the lessons that you can think of from the lives of these little known individuals.

**Study Paul’s Co-workers.** The study of Paul’s co-workers is especially helpful for Christian workers. Barnabus, Timothy, Silas, Demas, Tychicus, Trophimus, Erastus, Mark (John, Marcus), Luke (Lucas), Zenas, Apollos, Titus, Epaphroditus, Archippus, Carpus, Eubulus, Pudens, Linus, Claudia, Phebe, Priscilla and Aquilla, Aristarchus, Tertius, Jason, Sosipater, Gaius. Study each of these using the guidelines under the section on “Studying the People of the Bible.”

**Study Some of the Evil People of the Bible.** Some suggestions are as follows: Cain (Gen. 4), Pharaoh (Ex. 4-15), Balak and Balaam (Num. 22-23), Goliath (1 Sam. 17), Nabal (1 Sam. 25), Absalom (2 Samuel), Sheba (2 Sam. 20), Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings), Sanballat and Tobiah (Nehemiah), Haman (Esther), the king Herod who tried to kill Jesus (Matthew), Judas (Matthew-John), Annas the high priest (Jn. 18), Pilate (Jn. 18-19), the king Herod who killed James (Acts 12), Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13), Alexander the

Coppersmith (2 Tim. 4). Study each person using the guidelines under the section on “Studying People of the Bible.”

***Study the Dramatic Conversions in the Bible.*** Some suggestions are as follows: Ruth (Ruth), Naaman (2 Kings), Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4), Zacchaeus (Lk. 19), Nicodemus (John 3, 7, 19), the woman at the well (John 4), the blind man (John 9), Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8), Cornelius (Acts 10-11), Lydia (Acts 16), Philippian jailer (Acts 16), Crispus (Acts 18), Apollos (Acts 18). Study each person using the guidelines under the section on “Studying People of the Bible.” Or use the Meditation method and simply ask yourself, “What are all of the lessons from this person’s conversion?”

***Study the Unserved Characters of the Book of Acts.*** A study of the lives of the various unsaved people mentioned in Acts is very instructive. Study the following, using the guidelines under the section on “Studying People of the Bible.” Herod (Acts 12), Barjesus (Acts 13), the people of Lystra (Acts 13), the people of Athens (Acts 17), Demetrius (Acts 19), the chief captain (Acts 21-23), Felix (Acts 23-24), Festus (Acts 25), Agrippa (Acts 25-26), Julius (Acts 27), the barbarous people of Melita (Acts 28). Study each person using the guidelines under the section on “Studying People of the Bible.” Or use the Meditation method and write down all of the lessons that you can discover from the Bible’s description of each of these unsaved people.

***Study the Deaths Recorded in the Bible.*** Beginning in Genesis, go through the Bible and study the deaths that God records for us. Write down the answers to the following questions: (1) What were the circumstances and/or cause of this death? (2) Were there any last words? (3) What are the important lessons from this death?

***Study Key Christians in the Early Churches.*** In Acts and the Epistles we learn much about the lives of some of the early Christians. These are recorded for our instruction. Some of these are Peter, James, Stephen, Philip, Cornelius, Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos. Study each person using the guidelines under the section on “Studying People of the Bible.”

***Study the First and Last Mentions of Things in the Bible.*** The following was sent to me by a friend who desires to remain anonymous for the purposes of this book: “I picked up something from someone (I cannot remember if it was F. B. Meyer or A. T. Pierson) many years ago which has been useful in my study of

God's Word. This person developed what he called 'The Law of First Mention and the Law of Final Mention.' Here is an example of how the two laws worked in my behalf. I was studying John 14:6 where Jesus said, 'I am the way...' Thomas had told our Lord that he did not know 'the way' and so the Lord Jesus explained that He is the way. The first time the word 'way' is mentioned in the Bible is in connection with Adam and Eve being driven from the garden of Eden and God placing Cherubim with flaming swords to guard 'the way' that man could not get to the 'tree of life. Do you begin to see how this law opens up the meaning of what Christ said when He said, 'I am the way'? This not only applies to the first and last use of words, but also of names and places and even events. Genesis has many 'first mentions' and Revelation has many 'last mentions.' Many things mentioned first in Genesis are last mentioned in Revelation. Such things as the tree of life, Satan, sin, death, lying, pain, paradise, gold, the rainbow, angels, and on and on the list could go. What a study that is!"

***Study the Seven Churches in Revelation.*** There is a wealth of instruction contained in Christ's messages to the churches in Revelation 2-3. First read this passage three or more times, and mark the beginning and end of the message to each church. Then go back and study each message, answering the following questions: (1) How did Christ reveal Himself to this church? (2) What does this revelation teach me? (3) What commendations did Christ give to this church? (4) What warnings did Christ give to this church? (5) What lessons do I find in this passage for my own life?

***Study the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts.*** First, read the book of Acts at least twice, and mark every passage that mentions the Holy Spirit. You can use colors or symbols or merely underlining. You can mark every mention of the Holy Spirit with a symbol or a color, or you can divide the passages into "the filling of the Spirit" and "the baptism of the Spirit," using a different color for each. When you have completed your reading and have marked each passage, go back and study the passages carefully using the guidelines in the section on "Studying Individual Passages of the Bible."

***Study the Heart of Man.*** The Bible says much about the heart of man. It is the center of man's being and the seat of his will. The following passages speak of many conditions of the heart: Understanding heart (1 Ki. 3:9). Double heart (1 Ch. 12:33). Proud heart (2 Ch. 32:25). Wicked heart (De. 15:9). Sorrowful heart (Ne. 2:2). Soft heart (Job 23:16). Singing heart (Job 29:13). Upright heart (Ps. 97:11). Bitter heart (Pr. 14:10). Heavy heart (Pr. 25:20). Discerning heart

(Ec. 8:5). Removed heart (Isa. 29:13). Fearful heart (Is. 35:4). Deceived heart (Is. 44:20). Stony heart (Eze. 11:19). Pure heart (Mt. 5:8). Lowly heart (Mt. 11:29). Slow to believe heart (Lk. 24:25). Troubled heart (Jn. 14:1, 27). Impenitent heart (Rom. 2:5). Strifeful heart (Jam. 3:14). Hard heart (He. 3:8,10). Evil heart of unbelief (Heb. 3:12). Study each passage, answering the following three questions: What does this verse teach me about the heart? What lessons are there for my daily life? How can I use this teaching to help others?

**Study the Antichrist in the Bible.** The following are the key passages that deal with the Antichrist: Dan. 7-12; Mat. 24:15-29; 2 Thess. 2; 1 John 2; Rev. 11; 13; 17; 19; 20. Study these passages and organize the verses under the following headings: (1) What are the name's of the antichrist? (2) What is the character of the antichrist? (3) What are two ways the term antichrist is used in the Scripture? (4) What is the nationality of the antichrist? (5) How does the antichrist rise to power? (6) How long does the antichrist rule? (7) What are the characteristics of his reign? (8) What is the end of the antichrist?

**Study the people who received Christ at His birth.** These are the shepherds (Lk. 2), Simeon and Anna (Lk. 2), and the wise men (Mat. 2). Study each person using the guidelines under the section on "Studying People of the Bible." Or use the Meditation method and simply ask yourself, "What are all of the lessons from this person's conversion?"

**Study the centurions of the New Testament.** The term "century" means 100, and a centurion was a commander of 100 soldiers and had much authority in the Roman Empire (see Mat. 8:9). Several centurions are associated with the life and death of Christ and the establishment of the first churches in the book of Acts. Study each person using the guidelines under the section on "Studying People of the Bible." Or use the Meditation method and simply ask yourself, "What are all of the lessons from this person's conversion?"

**Study the Bible with a Bible Survey from Time to Time.** We will end at the same point we began. Even if you have already taken a Bible survey in Bible college or in a church class or you have followed my first suggestion and read the Bible through in conjunction with the *Halley's Bible Handbook*, it is very helpful from time to time to go through another survey in order to refresh your mind about the meaning of each book and how everything fits together into the whole. I suggest Willmington's *Guide to the Bible*, Wiersbe's *Notes on the Old and New Testament*, and Baxter's *Explore the Book*.

